

**NEW
LOOK!**
.....

THE REGENERATION ISSUE

265

STILL
THE WORLD'S
NUMBER 1
SCI-FI MAG

NEW SERIES EXCLUSIVE!

Capaldi! Coleman! Moffat!

DOCTOR WHO

“He’s just an idiot with a box trying to have as much fun as possible”

**SIR TERRY
PRATCHETT**

Top authors remember
the Discworld legend

Future

**MASSIVE
TV PREVIEW!**

**THE BIGGEST SHOWS
HEADING YOUR WAY**



SUPERGIRL



THE WALKING DEAD



HEROES REBORN

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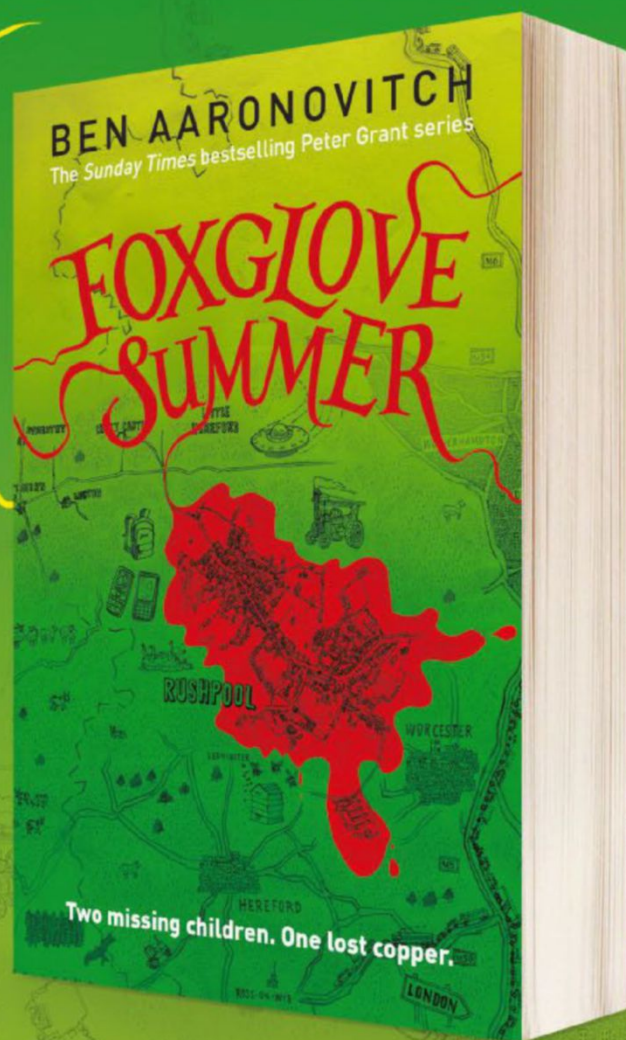
**GAMES
WORKSHOP**

Make it a

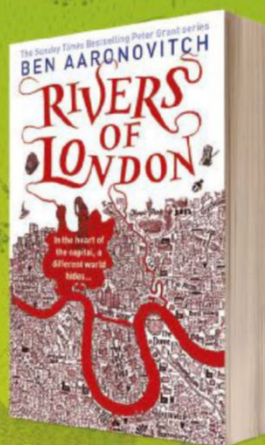
FOXGLOVE SUMMER

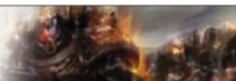
'An incredibly
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The Times



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DOCTOR WHO

"This year is more about the glory years of the Doctor and Clara"



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STAR WARS REBELS

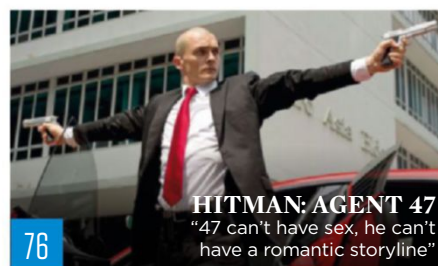
"Darth Vader is trapped in this period of torment"



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"47 can't have sex, he can't have a romantic storyline"

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Our Russell recalls happy days with Weetabix *Doctor Who* cards.

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#RedQueen

Rants & Raves

INSIDE THE SFX HIVE MIND

RICHARD EDWARDS EDITOR

RAVES

→ Watching *Ant-Man* made me very happy.

RANTS

→ Watching *Terminator Genisys* made me very sad.
→ I'm on board with pretty much everything Lucasfilm has announced so far for new *Star Wars*, but I'm sceptical about the Han Solo spin-off. How can his origin story possibly improve him?



NICK SETCHFIELD FEATURES EDITOR

RAVES

→ The latest *SPECTRE* trailer has cranked my expectations as high as an orbital laser.

→ Just finished reading a three-volume set of Neal Adams' *Batman* stories from the '70s. Gorgeous art, impeccable storytelling, lovely hint of gothic weirdness at the edges. Genius stuff.



IAN BERRIMAN HOME ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

RAVES

→ Looking forward to *Suicide Squad* after seeing the trailer. It's about time there was a superhero movie for teenage goths.
→ Rewatched *Children Of The Stones*, and had forgotten how spooky Sidney Sager's score is. Can someone release it on vinyl?



JORDAN FARLEY COMMUNITY EDITOR

RAVES

→ Adored *Ant-Man*. Luis may be my new favourite MCU character.
→ *Sense8* is half brilliant, half self-indulgent twaddle. After *Jupiter Ascending* the Wachowskis seem more at home on the small screen.

RANTS

→ *Terminator Genisys* – what a load of pap.



RUSSELL LEWIN PRODUCTION EDITOR

RAVES

→ *Inside Out* has got to be the best Pixar film of them all. I laughed, I cried, I was left dazed and dazzled by the invention on show. Truly fantastic cinema.
→ A long way behind but still fun were *Jurassic World* and *Ant-Man*. Amazing dinosaurs and a giant Thomas the Tank Engine do summer blockbusters make!



JONATHAN COATES ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ The next series of *Lego Minifigures* are all horror themed. Ooh, scary!
→ Pleased to see one of my all-time faves, *Total Recall*, getting a Time Machine feature this month (p86). "Nice to have you back with us, Mr Brubaker."
→ Can't wait to see Cruise ride that plane in *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*!



CATHERINE KIRKPATRICK DEPUTY ART EDITOR

RAVES

→ *Ant-Man* was bundles of fun and Paul Rudd is so well-suited to the role. Loved the clever plays with perspective and scale.
→ Although the teaser for series two of *Les Revenants* reveals nothing new, the music alone has me excited for its return.
→ *Inside Out* – Pixar at its finest!



ADRIAN HILL AD MANAGER

RAVES

→ I was lucky enough to get into Hall H while in San Diego to see the *Star Wars* cast presentation. I didn't expect to see anything new, but when JJ asked the audience, "Do you want to go to a *Star Wars* concert? We only have room for all of you!", well, it fuelled my inner seven-year-old self. It was like 1977 all over again.



ANDY WATT ARTIST

RAVES

→ *Star Wars*. This pupil of the class of '77 can't help but get excited (again). Phantom what? No idea what you're talking about...

RANTS

→ So there's the Facebook "make a *Dredd* sequel" campaign. I'd love to see it happen, but unless every member donates \$50,000 I don't think we'll ever see a follow-up, reboot or Dark Judge.



LAURA DRIFFIELD MARKETING MANAGER

RAVES

→ Intrigued to see what's coming in the new *X-Files*. So far, a dialogue-free trailer is all we've seen. Not enough! More!
RANTS
→ Nooooo! Not another Disney remake. The latest being *The Sword In The Stone*. We don't need it, the original still speaks to kids today.



Welcome to the new-look SFX! Yes, we've just regenerated into a new form, so it feels entirely appropriate that our cover star this month should be a guy with a history of changing his face, without fundamentally changing who he is and what he stands for.

The pages inside the mag will feel different – as well as updating our look, we've made everything clearer and easier to navigate. We've shifted a few things around, and given some regulars a big overhaul – you'll notice big changes to our letters pages (now called First Contact – p34) and our TV analysis section Viewscreen (p122).

Yet at its core, SFX is still about celebrating sci-fi and fantasy in all their forms, whether that's in movies, TV, books, comics, games, events or beyond. We're genre fans as much as you are, so we'll be asking the questions you want answers to – exploring the geeky places other mags don't reach is part of our DNA. Yes, we want to know why Superman doesn't wear his undies outside his tights anymore. We care that the TIE of TIE Fighter stands for Twin Ion Engine.

The next 12 months will be among the most exciting in sci-fi and fantasy history, with new *X-Files*, *Batman V Superman*, the final instalment of *The Hunger Games*, *Star Trek Beyond*... and a little movie set in a galaxy far, far away. Subscribe to SFX now (see p32) and make sure you don't miss a second.

Rich

Richard Edwards, Editor
@RichDEdwards

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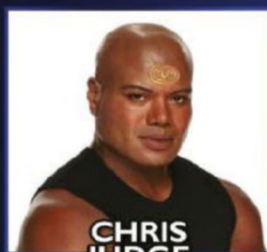
See me on page 58



FILM & COMIC CON

THE BIC BOURNEMOUTH

MEET THESE GUESTS...AND MORE!



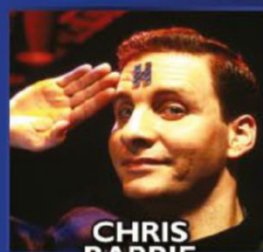
CHRIS JUDGE
STARGATE



SYLVESTER MCOY
DOCTOR WHO, HOBBIT



FINN JONES
GAME OF THRONES



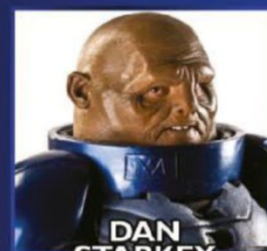
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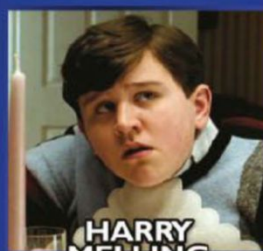
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ALIENS, TERMINATOR



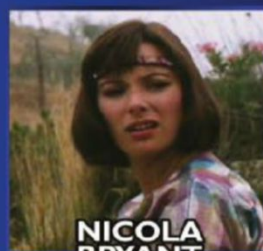
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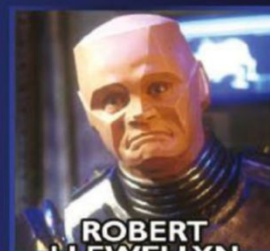
DAN STARKEY
DOCTOR WHO



HARRY MELLING
HARRY POTTER



NICOLA BRYANT
DOCTOR WHO



ROBERT LLEWELLYN
RED DWARF



ROBERT ENGLUND
NIGHTMARE ON ELM ST.



LALLA WARD
DOCTOR WHO



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GAME OF THRONES

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Red Alert

OCTOBER
2015

→ NEWS /// INTERVIEWS /// INSIGHT /// TEETH! → *edited by Jordan Farley*

ON SET EXCLUSIVE!

THE EMPIRE BITES BACK

From Dusk Till Dawn
polishes its fangs for
a second season

→ Last year saw Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino's cult favourite *From Dusk Till Dawn* adapted for television, but 2015 is the real landmark for fans of the bloodsucking thriller, because after almost 20 years Rodriguez has finally crafted his sequel in the form of the TV show's second season. Now that he's finished retelling the Gecko Brothers' first screen adventure, the Texas-based filmmaker is turning his attention to what happens next in their story, and as Red Alert walks onto the show's Austin set, we immediately see it involves even more toothsome undead action. →

Highlights



19 IT'S A MIRACLE!

→ Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham return to *Miracleman*.



21 HAWK THIS WAY

→ Director Terry Marcel on his belated *Hawk the Slayer* sequel.



24 THE ART OF THE CON

→ The moments that defined this year's San Diego Comic-Con.

SCI-FACT! Robert Rodriguez says his next film project will be either a remake of *Fire And Ice* or an adaptation of TV's *Jonny Quest*.

“Some ideas go all the way back to before the first *Dusk* film”

Zane Holtz's Richie Gecko, now a vampire himself, is on the run with Eiza González's Santanico Pandemonium, freed at last from her confinement in the sinister Titty Twister. But the two have run afoul of the Regulator. Played by new cast member, and frequent Rodriguez collaborator, Danny Trejo (bartender Razor Charlie in the original film), he's a supernatural Terminator targeting the couple at the command of fellow newcomer Lord Amancio Malvado (Esai Morales). One of the Nine Lords of the Night introduced in the first season, Malvado is enraged that Santanico has defied him. And today, in a dusty warehouse, the Regulator carries out his master's vengeance in an episode titled “Bring Me The Head Of Santanico Pandemonium”. Fists fly, guns are fired and fangs are bared in a display of savagery that satisfies what Trejo describes as the four requirements of any successful movie: bullets, blood, bombs and babes.

SEEK, LOCATE, DESTROY

“The Regulator goes after the Culebras, who kind of go off the reservation,” Rodriguez tells *Red Alert* when we later sit down with him, referring to the show's name for vampires. “Malvado conjures him up to go after Santanico, and to bring back Richard Gecko in particular, for a need that Malvado has. You won't find out until later in the season why he wants him. After Santanico escaped last season, his whole empire is threatened. He needs to find another source of blood to maintain his power, and he's determined to bring her back. So while she's out carving a new destiny for herself, her past keeps coming after her. You see how she got into the Twister to begin with, and how he kept her there. It really opens up a lot of the mythology.”

“The Regulator,” adds Rodriguez, “shows up at the most inconvenient times for our heroes, and can't be destroyed. Perfect for Danny! He's great.”



This may sting a little.

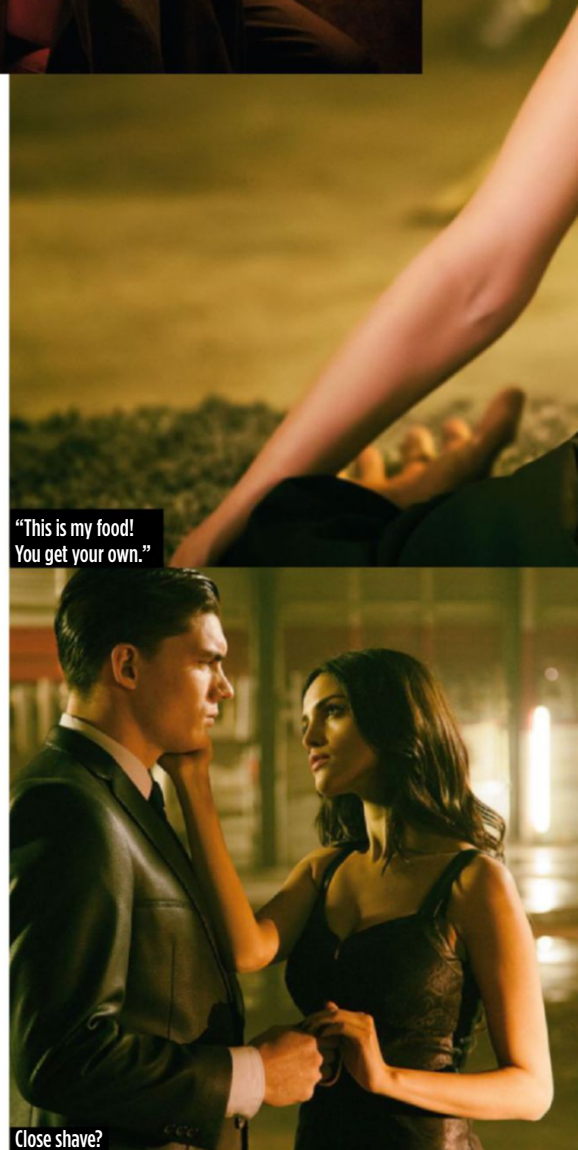
He's just a great character to pop in and show up in each episode to cause trouble.”

Also complicating the Geckos' lives is the fact that Richie himself is now a Culebra. “The brothers are always in contention,” explains Rodriguez, “and for them to be on a different path kind of makes everything have a different feel at first. When they eventually do come back together, they have a whole new dynamic that they have to deal with. Their Uncle Eddie that they talked about last season shows up. It's really cool seeing them all together, and to see him and see why he's such an influence on them.”

According to Rodriguez, some of season two's new elements were originally conceived for his 1996 film. “My showrunner Carlos Coto, and the writers, we kind of thought about where we wanted season two to go, so we'd know how to build season one to lead into it. How to retell the original movie in season one to lay a foundation for season two. So you saw pretty quickly the first season started going towards this area it was gonna set us up to go down. All the actors were coming together, the characters were paying off, and we built up certain characters even more. Some ideas that are in there go all the way back to before the first *Dusk Till Dawn* film. So it was a combination of finally getting to do something I've always wanted to do, and then reacting to the show itself, and just sort of the creativity that happens when you bring all these people together.”

Before leaving us, Rodriguez names his two favourite episodes of season two. “The first episode of the season and the last, the season finale, blow out. I just finished editing it, and it is so cool. I had so much fun getting to play in that world again. It's the best gig.” ●

From *Dusk Till Dawn: The Series* season two airs on Netflix weekly from 26 August.



“This is my food! You get your own.”

Close shave?



You may remember me from such bars as the Titty Twister.

CULEBRA CLUB

Catching up with the cast of *From Dusk Till Dawn: The Series*

THE SEARCHER

→ Actor DJ Cotrona says season two finds the smoother, elder Gecko brother, Seth, on a search for meaning: "He's really a guy that's lost everything. The only person he cared about in the world, his brother, is gone. He's kind of in a 'fuck the world, fuck everybody' position. The only person in the world that he's still connected to is Kate Fuller. You have this innocent little girl and this career criminal. As the story progresses, you're gonna see this guy try and crawl out of the hole that he found himself in. Slowly the dust comes off and we see if he can get his appetite back to be a human being."



THE SHARK

→ "Uncle Eddie," says a sharp-suited Jeff Fahey of his character on the set of *From Dusk Till Dawn*, "raised the brothers after their father passed away. I would feel comfortable in saying I'm their mentor, and taught them quite a few things and kept them together. Eddie loved the brothers like sons. He always valued the relationship that they had as thieves, but together. It even says in one scene that they're 'the perfect match of a card game.' So as we come into the second season, he re-enters their lives. And the game is afoot."

THE SPECTRE

→ While Danny Trejo has worked with Robert Rodriguez more times than any other actor, the director surprised the veteran performer for his return to the world of *From Dusk Till Dawn*. "When he first started the series," Trejo says, "I said, 'Robert, can I be the bartender?' He said, 'No, no, no. Let's get through this first season. I got something for you.' After *Machete*, it's tough to put me as the bartender." Instead, Rodriguez conceived an antagonist unlike any Trejo had played before. "You can't kill him unless you kill him with his own gun... I regulate. I don't negotiate. When the Regulator is after you, just pack your bags. Cause you're going home."

THE SEDUCTRESS

→ "The second season of *Dusk* is really a back story," says Eiza González of what's in store for Santanico Pandemonium. "Why is she dragging Richard towards her the whole first season and what is the goal of this character? You get to dissect the character way more this season. Last season was the growing tree, this season is the branches. This character gets even more badass too. In the last episode of season one she gets taken out of the Twister for the first time ever in thousands of years. You'll get to understand why she's running away and her goal."

SCI-FACT! *Once Upon A Time* will reach 100 episodes with the 11th episode of season five.

SHOWRUNNERS SPEAK!

THE MAGIC HOUR

Storybrooke's saviour turns to the dark side for *Once Upon A Time*'s fifth season



Ready for some darkness in

Storybrooke? *Once Upon A Time* executive producers Eddy Kitsis and Adam Horowitz certainly are, as they've been planning season five's exploration of Emma Swan's transformation into Dark Swan for some time.

"We've been wanting to do this for a while," Horowitz tells Red Alert. "We certainly spent all of last season building towards it. For us, Emma has always been on a journey of discovery of who she is, and coming to terms with her lineage. Her role of saviour and the lightness within her also meant at some point she had to face the darkness within her, which is what we'll spend a lot of this season on."

In the season four finale, Emma volunteered to tether herself to the Dark One's power, believing her friends and family will find a way to restore her. The search for a solution begins in Camelot to find Merlin (Elliot Knight), who can battle the darkness, and will recruit other characters, like Guinevere (Joana Metrass) and Percival (Andrew Jenkins), to join the quest too.

"We'll touch on the iconography of the different tellings of the Camelot story through time," Horowitz teases when asked how they'll weave the classic lore into the show. "But it's really about our core characters and about how the interactions with these characters from Camelot – how they meet them, if they meet them and where and when – are really about this journey of Emma as the Dark Swan, what she's going through and how it affects her family and loved ones."

Surprisingly, another familiar character will also pop up in the Camelot forest – Princess Merida from *Brave*. The live-action version of the character will be embodied by Scottish actress Amy Manson (*Being Human*'s Daisy) and appear in the season premiere. "It's the first Pixar character to be on the show," Horowitz reveals. "She's also very contemporary and well-defined for modern audiences, so because of that we want to honour all those great things about her and find a way to slip her into our world and make it feel seamless."



“We spent all of last season building towards this”

Even with new allies, Horowitz says the road back to light will be thorny for everyone. “Emma becoming the Dark One will throw every relationship into crisis and into a new set of obstacles, whether it’s Emma and Hook (Colin O’Donoghue), or Emma’s friendship with Regina (Lana Parrilla), Emma and her parents (Ginnifer Goodwin and Josh Dallas), it’s a seismic shift.”

Since Emma has become the agent of change for so many characters, Horowitz says the Storybrooke residents will have to step up. “The question of what happens now that there isn’t a saviour is something we deal with head on. Is there another? Who would it be and how would that work? They are important questions, especially when we see what an important part Emma played for everyone over the last four seasons. What’s it going to mean to not have her doing that?”

If this all sounds a bit dire, Horowitz assures, “It’s not all bleak. There are moments of hope and joy in Emma’s journey.”

Once Upon A Time airs on ABC from 27 September. Seasons 1-4 are currently available on Netflix UK.

AERIAL ASSAULT SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

→ **Xena: Warrior Princess** reboot in the works at NBC.

→ HBO says **Game Of Thrones** will run for at least eight seasons.

→ Syfy developing a “hyper-stylised, gritty adaptation” of gentle feminine drama **Little Women**. Er, what?

→ **Sleepy Hollow** crossing over with long-running David Boreanaz crime procedural **Bones** in the next, third season.

→ **Twin Peaks** season three pushed back a year to 2017.

→ Writer Jonathan Betuel rebooting **The Last Starfighter** as TV show **The Starfighter Chronicles**, complete with interactive virtual reality sections.

→ ITV’s sci-fi renaissance to continue with a **Harry Price: Ghost Hunter** series from *Ashes To Ashes*’ Jack Lothian.

→ Bryan Singer producing a **World War III** series for Spike TV.

→ **Humans**, **Salem** and **Teen Wolf** renewed for new seasons, but the American remake of **The Returned** has been axed.



BURTON C BELL

THE LEAD SINGER OF METAL BAND **FEAR FACTORY** IS A LIFELONG SCI-FI AFICIONADO

Favourite SF/fantasy film?

→ *Blade Runner*, hands down. It’s a beautiful film. I read the book and I’ve seen the film, and it’s almost two different stories, but the basic idea is there – “are androids empathetic?” And that really comes across in the film.

Favourite SF/fantasy TV?

→ *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The original series was great, but when they started writing *The Next Generation* it became more complex. They started using actual theories, actual terms and it seemed very plausible. By the second season the cast of characters really developed into their own. Data’s a great example of an android seeking the human elements he does not have, but in a lot of ways he’s the most human out of all of them.

Favourite SF/fantasy author?

→ I’d say Philip K Dick. My favourite of his books is *VALIS*, that one blew my mind. What I really like about Philip K Dick is that his stories are extremely psychological. That to me is the essence of science fiction, of trying to deal with the future and trying to figure out what is human and what’s not.

Favourite SF/fantasy comic?

→ The last one I really enjoyed was Ben Templesmith’s *Singularity 7*. He was one of the first guys to start talking about the theory of the singularity, man and machine becoming one. It’s fascinating because it’s starting to happen now. People are attached to their machines and can’t let them go.

Genexus by Fear Factory is available now via Nuclear Blast and the band embark on a UK tour in December. Burton’s limited edition graphic novel *The Industrialist* is available from BurtonCBell.com.

“DON’T QUOTE ME”

“SEEING HOW DUMB AND STUPID THEY OFTEN ARE I JUST COULDN’T IMAGINE MINIONS BEING GIRLS.”

Can’t fault *Minions* director Pierre Coffin’s logic when it comes to the lack of female Minions.



SCI-FACT! Robert Sheehan recently read Philip K Dick's *Martian Time-Slip*. His verdict: "f***ing mindbendingly wonderful."

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

THE MESSENGER

The psycho-drama about the living and the dead

IT'S SHYAMALAN MEETS IN TREATMENT

1 In *The Messenger*, Robert Sheehan plays Jack, a troubled soul burdened by the fact he can talk to the dead. When Jack comes into contact with Mark (Jack Fox), a prominent journalist murdered in a local park, it sets off a chain of events that sends this "ghost-whisperer" slipping further towards insanity. When Andrew Kirk's script found its way to veteran helmer David Blair (*The Lakes*), he was hooked. "The first appeal, I guess, for me was the fact it was the dead trying to contact the living, as opposed to the other way around," Blair tells Red Alert.

DON'T EXPECT HORROR

2 "I think because of the supernatural aspect, people have assumed it's a horror," says Sheehan. "It's really not. The dead are not presented in a spooky way; they're just there. They're perturbed about something, they're hanging around, and I'm the bridge to the living world." Blair concurs, admitting he'd "never seen it as a horror picture". With Jack delving into his own past as he tries to relay messages to Mark's grieving widow Sarah (Tamzin Merchant), Blair adds, "To me, it was a much more psychological thing with a sense of mystery about it."

“The dead are not presented in a spooky way, they're just there”

GHOSTLY REUNION

3 Sheehan, best known as the immortal Nathan in E4's hilarious Asbos-meets-superpowers drama *Misfits*, had worked with Blair before, on an episode of Jimmy McGovern's *Accused*. "The content of that wasn't a million miles from this," says Sheehan. "It was about a guy who is experiencing delusion and paranoia; you're not sure if he's insane or he's essentially justified in his paranoia." It probably didn't help his sanity that Scouse comic John Bishop played his father. Either way, Blair felt Sheehan was the perfect choice to play Jack. "He's a huge driving force behind the film."

AMBIGUITY RULES

4 Don't expect any easy answers here, with audiences left to ponder whether Jack can see dead people or is simply suffering from a mental breakdown. "David's very into keeping the old powder dry and not giving that away," notes Sheehan. "Essentially keeping people at a fork in the road wondering, 'What's the truth here?'" For Blair, it was not the first time in his career he'd dealt with mental illness on screen. "You're always posing the same question: by whose definition are we mad?" he says. "It took Robert a wee while to grapple with, but [I said], 'Don't look for ways to play mad. Just be. Let us be the judge of that.' That will ultimately be more interesting."

THE OTHER SIDE

5 Shooting *The Messenger* in the north of England – not least in a creepy cemetery in Macclesfield – you might expect some spooky encounters. "Unfortunately not!" sighs Sheehan. "I'm still yearning for that supernatural experience, but it's not yet come." While the actor admits he's "open to it all", he's also aware that not all paranormal visitations are real. "I think sometimes people can delude themselves into believing things, to be honest." ●

The Messenger premiered at the Edinburgh Film Festival and opens on 25 September.

"KNIGHTS OF SIDONIA IS A GREAT
DECONSTRUCTION OF THE SPACE OPERA GENRE"

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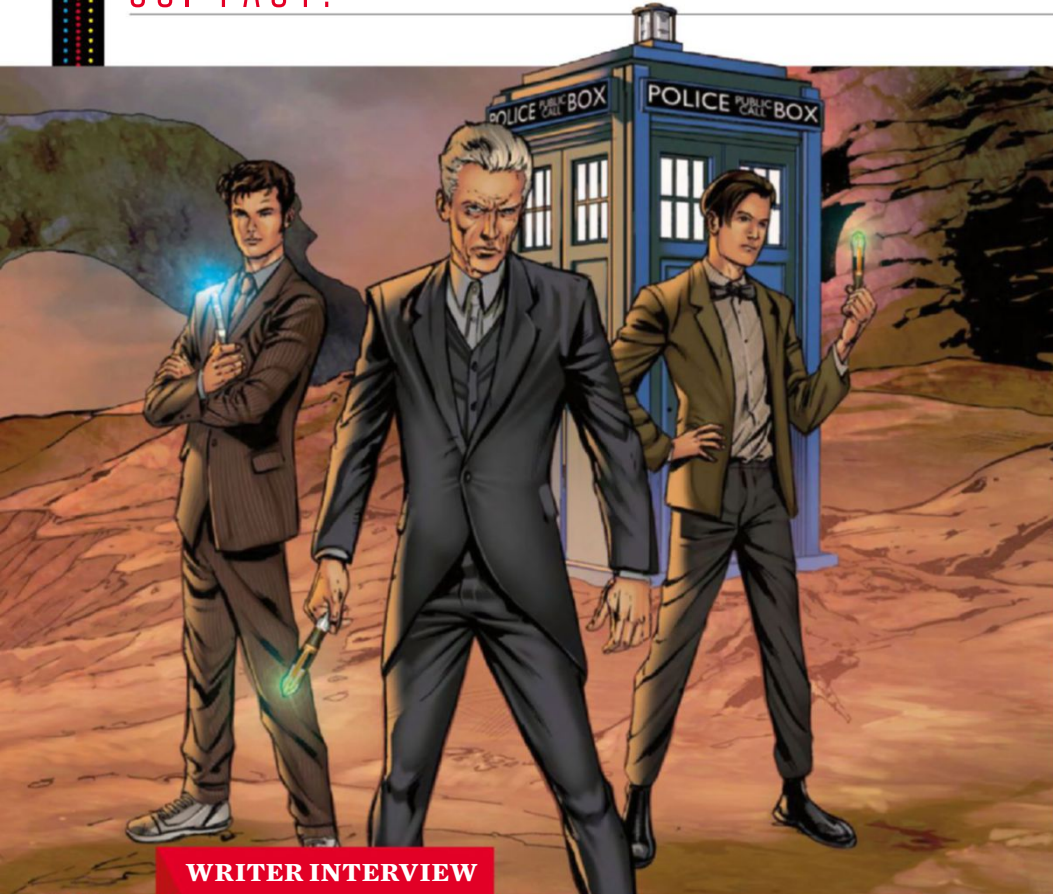
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SCI-FACT! Paul Cornell's creator-owned series *This Damned Band* is also out this month.



WRITER INTERVIEW

We assume the fourth one is just around the corner.

THE FAB FOUR

Paul Cornell pens latest *Doctor Who* comics crossover **Four Doctors**

➔ **As Paul Cornell knows,** masterminding a multi-Doctor story is a huge responsibility in any medium. After scripting IDW's final *Doctor Who* offering in 2013, the author is now orchestrating *Four Doctors*, Titan Comic's first ever crossover featuring the Time Lord's 10th, 11th and 12th incarnations along with the War Doctor.

"My favourite thing, from the times this happened on screen, is the interaction of the different Doctors and between their companions," Cornell tells Red Alert. "You get to learn so much about these characters from how they deal with *themselves*, and what other fictional characters can you say that about?"

Illustrated by Neil Edwards, the weekly series brings together Clara Oswald with Gabby Gonzalez and Alice Obiefune, from Titan's *Who* line. "Something I was determined to do was to make sure this fits into the runs of the 10th, 11th

and 12th Doctor comics," says Cornell. "The first issue leads with Clara, but the second issue is from Gabby's point of view, and the third focuses on Alice. They're the people we've come to know from their titles, but if this is the first time you've met them you won't have any problems getting to know them, as we've also designed the series as an ideal jumping-on point."

Opening in 1920s Paris, Cornell describes the city as a backdrop for some cosmic events that will take the Doctor and friends to some different worlds and dimensions. "I wanted Neil to have somewhere more interesting to draw than modern day London," he says. "The story's about an impossible photo that signals the end of the universe, and the Doctors trying to prevent a terrible destiny. It's a summer blockbuster with an emotional core." ●

Four Doctors #1 is out now.



AFTERLIFE
CELEBRATING ICONIC
SCI-FI STARS

107

WALTER KOENIG

Chekov in Star Trek



Gene Roddenberry cast Walter Koenig in the second series of *Star Trek* in the hope of wooing a younger audience, playing Russian navigator Pavel Andreievich Chekov, a character with an amusing way of pronouncing "vessels". That comedic touch was still intact when *Afterlife* spoke to the actor at Gold Coast Supanova.

What's the strangest request you've had from a fan?

➔ I was recently asked to sell one of my hairpieces. I got rid of my hairpiece five years ago. I'm too old to worry about vanity at that level.

Have any of Chekov's skills or attributes been useful in real life?

➔ Well, a sense of humour is important – if I can make people laugh and make them feel more comfortable then great! It's a way of bonding.

What would Chekov be doing now?

➔ He... he'd be dead [laughs]! Retired, definitely retired.

Is there anything you think was unfinished about Chekov's story?

➔ Yeah we never got to know who he was. He was an expositional character. He was there to help push the story but not to reveal himself.

Did you keep any souvenirs?

➔ I have the leather outfit that I wore in *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* on the streets of San Francisco.

Is there anything from the show you wish was real?

➔ Yes, I wish transporting were real so I wouldn't have to take those long ghastly flights!

What would it say on Chekov's gravestone?

➔ He screamed a lot!

REX (3)

SCI-FACT!

The reason the Suicide Squad are in Belle Reve at the start of the film? Ben Affleck's Batman put them all there.

**FREEZE
FRAME**
TOP TRAILERS
DISSECTED

SUICIDE SQUAD

OUT
5 AUG
2016

DC's anti-Avengers assemble for the first *Suicide Squad* trailer



↑ Meet Amanda Waller (Viola Davis), responsible for the hair-brained scheme to use supervillains as deniable assets on dangerous missions.



↑ Waller recruits from the "worst of the worst" incarcerated at Belle Reve penitentiary, including Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie).



↑ Diablo (Jay Hernandez) acquires pyrokinesis after being possessed by a demon, something this teaser seems to be hinting at.



↑ Killer Croc (Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje) shows off his shiny whites. There's a pleasing man-in-a-suit feel to the costume.



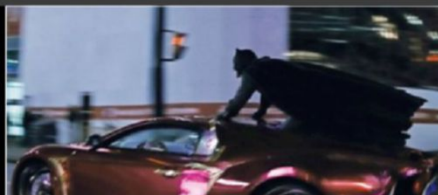
↑ Harley appears in several costumes in the trailer, but this is her Squad look, complete with signature baseball bat.



↑ The Enchantress (Cara Delevingne) in her full occult glory. We don't see her hang with anyone here – could she be a late addition to the team?



↑ In a likely flashback Dr Harleen Quinzel is strapped down by the Joker (Jared Leto) for a spot of electroshock therapy in Arkham Asylum.



↑ Batman takes a ride on the Joker-mobile in another pre-incarceration flashback. Could Bats be out for justice after the murder of Robin?



↑ Floyd Lawton/Deadshot (Will Smith) takes aim. Given Smith's mega-stardom expect him to stay mostly mask-less.



↑ Captain Boomerang (Jai Courtney) rocking the bling, but not a throwing stick in sight in this first teaser.



↑ The Suicide Squad line up, including samurai Katana (Karen Fukuhara) and Waller's enforcer Rick Flagg (Joel Kinnaman).



↑ And here's the clown prince of crime in the process of torturing Harleen. "I'm just gonna hurt ya, really, really bad."

The Buzz



RICH: Not so much a trailer as a roll call for DC's rogues' gallery, but that's not really a problem when it's done with such style. Extra points to Will Smith for saying the name of the movie.



NICK: The throwaway mention of Superman is weirdly thrilling – our first real sense of a connected big-screen DCU. Also love that they're embracing comic book weirdness like Killer Croc.



JAYNE: My god, what a miserable song – it sucked the life out of me! I was left a bit nonplussed by everything else; although, brilliantly, Harley Quinn looks better than the Joker...



JORDAN: Wasn't sold on the early pics, but *Suicide Squad* now has my full attention. Margot Robbie's Harley looks like the real star, and I can't wait to see more of Leto's psychotic clown.

SCI-FACT! *Fear The Walking Dead* has already been renewed for a second season.



FIVE MINUTES WITH...

KIM DICKENS

Surviving the first days of the zombie apocalypse in *Fear The Walking Dead*

WHAT THE DICKENS?

“I play Madison Clarke, the matriarch of the family, patchwork family. I’ve got teenagers, I’ve been a single mom for a while, I’m just moving in with my ‘lover’ – much to the dismay of my teenagers. I think it’s a very recognisable, relatable family.”

MADISON’S AVENUE

“Madison is a strong woman. She’s certainly rallied through a lot of tough times, and she’s very pragmatic, which makes her pretty quick to rise to the occasion and make tough decisions. That doesn’t mean she’s not vulnerable at times and questioning it all as it falls apart. Her primary goal is, ‘How do I protect my family?’”

THE STUFF OF NIGHTMARES

“When we first started shooting I had nightmares. I think my psyche was just trying to process it, thinking wait a minute, what are we doing? But now I’m able to separate [real-life and zombies] pretty good.”

ACTION STATIONS

“We’re doing plenty of action. I wouldn’t say it’s like Tom Cruise hanging off buildings and stuff, but close to that. It’s more than I’ve done in a long time and I love it now. I get disappointed if I just have a dialogue scene.”

DON’T WALK THIS WAY

“I’d just begun watching *The Walking Dead*, but when I got close to getting the role I stopped. I asked if I should just power through it all and they said, ‘No, no, no! You shouldn’t know anything about the apocalypse!’”

Fear The Walking Dead comes to AMC US from 23 August, and AMC UK (on BT Vision) from 31 August.



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SCI-FACT!

Original *Miracleman*/Marvelman creator Mick Anglo came up with one of the first British superheroes, Wonderman, in 1948.

NEW AUTHOR

SETH DICKINSON

THE SHORT STORY
 SCRIBE GOING INTO
 POLITICS WITH DEBUT
 NOVEL *THE TRAITOR*



What would you write as *The Traitor's* cover blurb?

→ There's a monster coming. An empire with the answers to everything. It wants to rule your home, disassemble your family, and make you a tool. You are seven years old. You are armed with your wits. No other weapon can be trusted. You will never, ever surrender. Here is your solution: conquer the empire from the inside. Rule the world. Fix the course of history.

How long did you work on it?

→ About seven months. It came together elegantly. I knew the climax and the ending, and I knew the book's operating principle: denying yourself human connection in the name of your secret work. I wanted to tell a story about a heroine who'd pay any price to achieve a good, admirable goal.

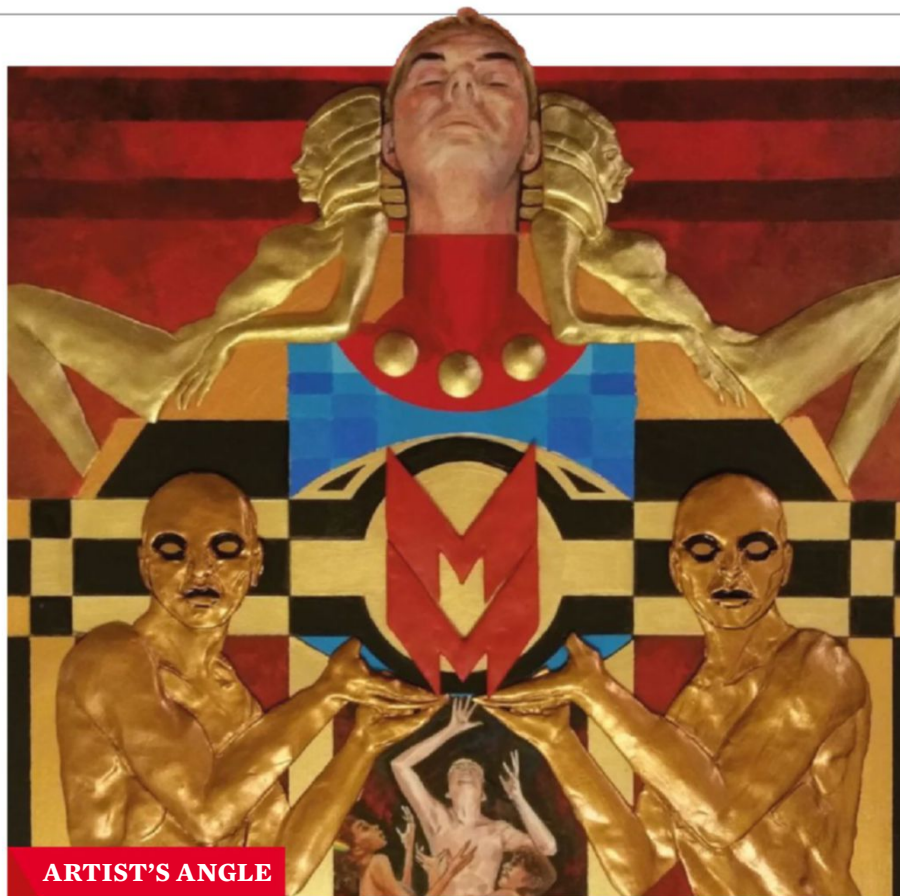
How did you go about building the world of *The Traitor*?

→ Very carefully! As geopolitical fantasy, I need to show how climate and geography shape civilisations, and how these create the characters and conflicts driving the story.

Which SF/fantasy authors are your biggest inspirations?

→ I love Megan Whalen Turner, Iain Banks, Nicola Griffith, Peter Watts, Yoon Ha Lee, Aliette de Bodard, and I'm sure I'm forgetting so many. Lately I've loved work by Roberto Bolaño, Hilary Mantel and Max Gladstone. The world's full of awesome writing.

The Traitor is published on 15 September by Pan Macmillan.



ARTIST'S ANGLE

The original "Golden Age" artwork has been remastered.

GOLDEN YEARS

Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham's *Miracleman* returns to print



Describing it as "one of the precious

moments in my career," there's no one more pleased to see *Miracleman* back than Mark Buckingham. Next month Marvel begins reprinting Neil Gaiman and Mark's Buckingham's incomplete *Miracleman* run, two decades after it ceased publication following the bankruptcy of Eclipse Comics.

"I've always felt that it was my experimental sketchbook laid bare," Buckingham tells Red Alert. "It's full of flaws, and yet it's bold in vision. As a whole, I think it still stands up."

With most of the original artwork still in his possession, Buckingham has painstakingly remastered each issue, collaborating with letterer Todd Klein and colourist D'Israeli. "We've rescanned all the art, which now looks crisper and sharper than ever before, and then digitally recoloured it all beautifully," he explains. "Todd has then relettered it all."

Following on from Alan Moore, Gaiman and Buckingham were determined to embark on a different direction when they assumed the *Miracleman* reins in 1992. "We were relatively new to the business and had impossibly big boots to fill," recalls Buckingham. "By shifting focus away from Alan's core story and onto the impact this new world was having on others, we could tell short stories, in radically different ways, while we developed our own voice."

After opening arc "The Golden Age," Gaiman and Buckingham will finally conclude "The Silver Age," before embarking upon the final instalment, "The Dark Age." "Luckily Neil and I have been keen archivists of our work," he says, "and many notes have resurfaced to help us get back to grips with the tales we're telling." ●

Miracleman By Gaiman And Buckingham #1 is published on 2 September.

SCI-FACT! Soggy 'tached Hulk-hater Thunderbolt Ross (William Hurt) will return to the MCU in *Civil War*.**SPOTLIGHT**HARD FACTS,
WILD SPECULATION

CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR

Earth's mightiest square off in the Cap threequel

REGISTER HERE

❖ New York. South Africa. Sokovia. Look, you can't be an Avenger without breaking a few major population centres, which is why – following another major combustible costumed incident – their big boy scout of a boss is staring at the sharp end of the official Superhero Registration Act... and the freedom-fancying Captain America is rather reluctant to stick his John Hancock on it.

IRON POLITICS

❖ Trouble is that Cap's old avenging compadre is rather keen on the new Accords. Tony Stark's rather terrifying experiences in the Avengers movies – including creating Ultron – have given a guilty Iron Man a rather more “pragmatic” political outlook when it comes to protecting the planet. It's going to be more than logs that get split over this tete-a-tete...

STARK CHOICES

❖ But there's also a personal divide. Rogers is determined to track down his old best bud Bucky Barnes. However, the former Winter Soldier now has a lot of blood on his metallic Hydra-hand... including that of Tony's parents, killed in a “car crash”. Awkward...

AVENGERS DISASSEMBLE

❖ *Civil War* will see everyone get picked off the bench to play. The *Ant-Man* post-credits stinger suggests Scott Lang and Falcon will play for the Cap, while you'd imagine War Machine comes out battling for Stark. Whether Black Widow, Scarlet Witch, the Vision and Hawkeye choose to

put ink to paper remains to be seen – the only thing guaranteed is that come the Infinity War in 2018, the good guys are not going to be match fit, and probably without their talismanic leader too: expect Steve Rogers to be very much benched by the end credits here.

BIG NEW SIGNINGS

❖ Of course, *Civil War* will give fans a first glimpse at the new, younger incarnation of Spider-Man, played by Tom Holland. Also getting his debut run out is Chadwick Boseman's Black Panther, ahead of his own movie – especially as T'Challa's home country of Wakanda is one of the key locations of *Civil War*'s action.

HYDRA HEROES

❖ Of course, there are nefarious hands lurking behind the scenes, and not just the headlining bad guy – Hydra affiliate and superhero masquerader Baron Zemo (Daniel Bruhl) – or the returning Crossbones. No, our money says that it'll be Martin Freeman's mystery-shrouded character – a high-end politician – squeaking “Heil Hydra” by movie's end and sticking Cap's stapler in jelly.

WHEN IT'S OUT

❖ *Captain America: Civil War* will kick off on 16 April 2016. ●

**“DON'T QUOTE ME”**

“I HEARD THAT FOX WAS GONNA DO ALIEN VS PREDATOR, WHICH REALLY DEPRESSED ME BECAUSE I WAS VERY PROUD OF THE MOVIES.”

Didn't like *AvP*? You're in good company – Sigourney Weaver has no love for it either.



AERIAL ASSAULT SCI-FI TV ROUND UP

CASTING CALL

→ **Daredevil** season two has found its Elektra in the shape of *GI Joe: Retaliation*'s Elodie Yung.

→ Michael Chiklis has transferred to **Gotham** Police Department as Gordon's idealistic boss Captain Barnes, while

Natalie Alyn Lind will play Bruce's future love interest Silver St Cloud.

→ *Transformers* star Josh Duhamel signs on for Stephen King adap **11/22/63** as brutal butcher Frank Dunning.

→ Jeri Ryan to guest in **Arrow** season four. She'll play a Queen family friend with political ambitions.

→ The Lone Gunmen back from the dead for **The X-Files** miniseries.

→ Teddy Sears set as original speedster Jay Garrick in **The Flash** season two. *Haven*'s Adam Copeland and Michael Ironside have also joined the show as the Atom Smasher and Captain Cold's father respectively.



REX (C)

SCI-FACT! Original Hawk, John Terry, was last seen in *Lost* but is now retired.



Hawk's original, er, dynamic line-up.

HAWK RETURNS!

SLAYING ALIVE

The Mindsword finally looks set to return after 35 years in *Hawk The Hunter*

→ **Terry Marcel's 1980 movie *Hawk The Slayer***, a micro-budget swords-and-sorcery take on Kurosawa's samurai yarns, has attracted affection and gentle mockery in about equal measure. Now the 73-year-old director is dusting down the follow-up he penned back during the *Dungeons & Dragons* boom. "We were pestered by the fans!" shrugs a gleeful Marcel, almost baffled by the revived interest. With a crowdfunding drive in the works to raise what's needed, a sequel could finally happen – and as a pilot for a possible TV show...

"We dream of a five-year series but there isn't enough in *Hawk The Slayer* to really do what's required for television. I had to go back and recreate a whole new world and a new arc," Marcel continues. "We then showed the script around but everybody said the same thing: 'We love it... but it's been 35 years. We need to see something.' We can't get a series off the ground unless we show something.

That's how the sequel is now, I've had to prepare the viewers for a potential TV series."

Ray Charleson, the original Crow, has pledged to return but as a different, older elf. "Ray plays a character called Bowman," explains Marcel. "New Crow comes across an old elf who's dying because of these horrible wood bandits." All the other roles will be played by younger actors, including a resurrected villain Voltan. As well as helping with production, 2000 AD publisher Rebellion has snagged the publishing and videogame rights so we could be seeing a lot more of the rejuvenated adventurers. But Marcel acknowledges it's in the hands of the Kickstarter crew now: "In our perfect world we prep in October, and we shoot in November in Lithuania. If the fans can pull it off, we're away." ●

Hawk The Slayer screens at *FrightFest* on 30 August, which is when the sequel's Kickstarter will officially launch. www.hawkthehunter.com.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Three '80s fantasy classics in need of a belated sequel

1 WILLOW

The original An aspiring wizard and a sellsword protect an infant destined to destroy an evil queen.

The sequel?

Thirty years later *Willow*, a full-blown wizard, has turned to the dark side. Madmartigan enlists Willow's secret son, a farm boy living with his aunt and uncle, to save the world. Subtitle: *A Fresh Hope*.

Who should star? Taron Egerton



2 DRAGONSLAYER

The original A sorcerer's apprentice is sent to kill a 400-year-old dragon terrorising a nearby kingdom.

The sequel?

Turns out Vermithrax Pejorative had kids, and they're miffed. Magic is a dying art, but Galen and Valerian's great, great, great granddaughter has kept her family's mystical fires burning...

Who should star?

Saoirse Ronan



3 KRULL

The original Prince Colwyn embarks on a quest to save his betrothed from alien invaders using super-cool five-bladed boomerang the glaive.

The sequel? Who needs plot when you've got a goddamn glaive?

Who should star?

Chris Hemsworth



Event Horizon

CONVENTIONS,
SHOWS AND
BEYOND

OWL SERVICE

Eat a three-course meal inspired by the weird world of *Twin Peaks* at **The Owls Are Not What They Seem**



With a much-anticipated third season on the way, *Twin Peaks* fever hasn't been this palpable since the summer of 1990. To make the agonising wait till 2017 a little more bearable, London-based event companies Lemonade And Laughing Gas and Blanch & Shock have teamed up to create an immersive, theatrical dining experience inspired by David Lynch and Mark Frost's seminal show. We quizzed co-organiser **Louise Orwin** about what guests can expect.

What the heck is an immersive theatrical dining experience?

☛ The idea is the guests will be invited into the world that we create, so you'll be having a three-course meal but you'll also be totally immersed in our *Twin Peaks*-inspired universe. So you might be eating dinner with characters, people will be taken off to secret encounters, there might be some late-night missions to get involved in... one of our big things is constantly keeping you on your toes. But not so much during dinner, because we like people to eat in peace!

Cherry pie and black coffee aside, what's on the menu?

☛ The food will be drawn from things you see in the show, but the world and the experience is inspired by, rather than an actual recreation of, a scene from *Twin Peaks*. So even though there'll be elements of actual foodstuffs that you see in the show, the menu will be looking to enhance the experience of what it might be like to be part of that *Twin Peaks* universe.

There's also a themed bar. What do you get for the £5 entry price?

☛ That is just the bar entry, it's a secondary space which is the end point of the journey for dinner ticket holders, but that space is actually really exciting. It's going to be a lot more fluid, a lot more trippy and surreal. We thought it would be really great to open that up to people who want to come to the bar but can't afford to come to the dinner, or people who want to keep coming back. ●

Tickets cost £66.50 and are available now at www.notwhattheyseem.com.



Don't have too much cherry pie before dinner...

DATE
27 August-
17 September

LOCATION
The Black Lodge,
er, London

DATE
27-31
August

LOCATION
VUE West End,
Leicester Square

SUMMER SCREAMS

Legendary horror film jamboree **FrightFest** returns for its 16th year



Like your films

freaky and your bum numb? Then rejoice because annual five-day horror film festival FrightFest is almost upon us. Packed with premieres, previews, personal appearances and signings, FrightFest attracts horror nuts from around the world to Leicester Square, and with good reason.

This year's highlights include *Mad Max* pastiche *Turbo Kid*, 2000 AD doc *Futureshock*, *The Hallow* (new from future Crow helmer Corin Hardy), and *Frankenstein* from *Candyman* director Bernard Rose.

It's the sort of place our resident horror expert Penny Dreadful feels right at home! For more information head to www.frightfest.co.uk. ●



Get your cycle proficiency badge with *Turbo Kid*.

COMING UP

MELKSHAM COMIC CON

29-30 August

→ Live in the South West? Why not support this local non-profit con which celebrates sequential art in its many forms. www.melkshamcomiccon.com

COMICS UNCOVERED

6 September

→ Aspiring comic creators: don't miss this Birmingham festival featuring demos, workshops, talks, portfolio reviews and seminars with comic book luminaries. www.comicsuncovered.co.uk

THE LAKES INTERNATIONAL COMIC ART FESTIVAL

16-18 October

→ The three-day comic art festival invades Kendal again with a free comics marketplace and quality ticketed events. www.comicartfestival.com

BRAM STOKER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

22-25 October

→ The independent film festival celebrating all things macabre returns to Whitby for its sixth year. www.bramstokerfilmfestival.com

FANTASYCON

23-25 October

→ John Connolly, Brandon Sanderson and Jo Fletcher are guests of honour for Mistress of Ceremonies Juliet E McKenna at this year's FantasyCon in Nottingham. www.fantasycon2015.org

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SCI-FACT! JJ Abrams broke his back on the *Force Awakens* set – ouch!

JJ Abrams: Dark Lord of the lightsabers.

CON FLOOR REPORT!

GEEK SHOW

The 20 moments that defined San Diego **Comic-Con 2015**

STAR WARS PUT ON A CONCERT...

1 As long as they didn't decide to announce a D-BOX re-release of the prequels, *The Force Awakens* panel was always going to be a biggie. Dedicated fans camped out overnight to catch a further glimpse at a galaxy far, far away, but the highlight came *after* the panel was over when JJ Abrams invited every single person in the 6,500 seater Hall H to a one-off *Star Wars* concert across the street. Spare a thought for Kevin Smith, whose *Yoga Hosers* panel followed Hall H's mass exodus.

...AND BROUGHT SOME GORGEOUS NEW FOOTAGE

2 For the rest of us unlucky millions who didn't get to see the San Diego Symphony Orchestra do John Williams the *Force Awakens* panel did throw up some gold. Not a new trailer, but the next best thing: a behind the scenes video about the film's practical effects that left us head to toe in goosebumps. Can it be December already?

©GETTY (1)

This pair weren't in Hall H – but they're in *The Force Awakens*.

Domhnall Gleeson and Harrison Ford know many things that you don't.

STAN LEE GOT TURNED INTO A ROBOT

3 He's created more big-name comic-book heroes than anybody in existence, and now Stan Lee has joined the ranks of the superpowered courtesy of *Lego Marvel's Avengers*. Stan made a surprise appearance at the game's Comic-Con panel, but he was almost overshadowed by his "Stan-buster"-suited alter ego. Iron Man needs to get himself a cardigan...

THERE WERE SOME NOTABLE NO-SHOWS

4 This year's Comic-Con was as much about the people who didn't turn up as the ones who did. Marvel has helped put Comic-Con on the map in recent years, so their absence was keenly felt, while Sony and Paramount were also MIA. With little in terms of big announcements at this year's event is it a sign that Comic-Con is no longer considered the powerhouse movie platform it once was by major studios?



Jared Leto's Joker doesn't need to panic quite so much about the fans now.

ENTER THE JOKER

5 In footage specially prepared for the Comic-Con crowd (before it promptly leaked online, leading Warners to release the video officially) we got our first look at David Ayer's still-filming *Suicide Squad* (p17). More importantly, we got to see Jared Leto's clown prince of crime in action for the first time. If the cheers in Hall H were anything to go by his performance proved much less divisive than the early pictures.

THE TWELFTH DOCTOR WENT DIGITAL

6 *Lego Dimensions* is the ultimate in fan wish fulfillment. Where else would you get to see Batman, Gandalf, Homer Simpson and the Doctor joining forces? Watching Peter Capaldi watching Lego Peter Capaldi at the game's launch was a highlight – he seemed to enjoy it nearly as much as we enjoyed the revelation you can play as *all 13 Doctors*.



Should Lego's Twelfth Doctor really have a big grin...?



Add up all their ages and it comes to Stan Lee's age. Pretty much.

THE X-UNIVERSE POSED FOR A SELFIE

7 Ginormo cast appearances have become a perennial favourite on the Hall H stage since Marvel's Avengers assembled. Not to be outdone, Fox united the entirety of its own Marvel universe live on stage, with the casts of *X-Men: Apocalypse*, *Deadpool*, *Fantastic Four* and *Gambit* (in the form of Channing Tatum) brought together for a superhero love-in. Naturally, they all posed for a selfie with the legendary Stan Lee (back in human form). Your move, Marvel Studios.

THE HUNGER GAMES MADE ITS FINAL APPEARANCE

8 By this point it feels like the cast of *The Hunger Games* have been putting in Comic-Con appearances for decades, but unless Lionsgate gets desperate and puts *Katniss: The College Years* on the fast track this is the last time we'll see District 12's motley crew together on stage. Best bit: the cast collectively failing to pull off a Mockingjay whistle. →



Hunger Games group hug! Wish you were in the middle?

SCI-FACT! Duncan Jones revealed that *Warcraft* is "pretty much a finished movie", with fewer than 10 VFX shots to complete.

ARROW AND GOTHAM CROSSED OVER INTO THE REAL WORLD

9 Blame Loki for kick-starting a trend of actors appearing in character on stage. This year a pair of DC shows got in on the act. Jerome, aka the future Joker, hijacked an audience member's question during the *Gotham* panel, and Stephen Amell appeared on stage as the *Green Arrow* in his new season four togs, while pledging that the show will move closer to its comic origins. Does this mean Comic-Con is now part of *Arrow* continuity?

WARCRAFT MADE A SPLASH

10 Duncan Jones's videogame adaptation *Warcraft* doesn't come out till June 2016, but the film was out in force at this year's Comic-Con. There was a full-sized replica of Orgrim Doomhammer on the Con floor, a virtual reality tour of Azeroth and a panel, during which Jones presented almost five minutes of orc-some finished footage from the film. We're counting down the days.



Reedus, Yeun and Lincoln ignore the photobombers.

THE WALKING DEAD BROUGHT THE BLOOD

13 When it comes to memorable stands on the con floor, TV has stolen a march on its big-screen cousins – it seems the days of Marvel recreating the Asgard throne room are long gone. AMC's latest *Walking Dead* offering gave punters the chance to pose in front of the revolving door that saw a someone meet a grisly end in season five. Scarily realistic – though the cast don't seem too flustered.



Orgrim Doomhammer: Comic-Con's best security guard.



Duncan Jones and Travis Fimmel discuss crafting *Warcraft* the movie.

ASH VS EVIL DEAD WAS GROOVY

14 Unexpected treat of Comic-Con 2015? The *Evil Dead* sequel show looks surprisingly great, as well as funny and exceptionally bloody. Seems Sam Raimi isn't going to stop tormenting Bruce Campbell on screen anytime soon.



Hopefully Ash always has a spare shirt.

JOSS WHEDON REVEALED HIS NEXT PROJECT

11 Actual announcements were rarities at this year's Comic-Con. The one that got us most excited wasn't *Green Lantern Corps* (p28), but Joss Whedon's return to comics after a box office-conquering run of comic book movies. During a Q&A session the man they call Joss revealed *Twist* in an unmistakably Whedony manner, promising to deal with "the most personal question that can be put to us, which is why isn't there a Victorian female Batman?"



COMICS WERE THERE. HONEST

12 Actual comics may be drowned out by the noisy big boys from film and TV at San Diego Comic-Con nowadays, but there were some big announcements at this year's con. The artists for Frank Miller's *Dark Knight* trilogy closer, *The Master Race*, were confirmed (Andy Kubert and Klaus Janson), a Chewbacca solo comic was announced and Marvel's soon-to-be-rebooted comic universe had more of a presence than any Marvel Studios movies.





THE DEADPOOL TRAILER WAS A SMASH

18 *Deadpool* was always going to be a hit at Comic-Con. After all, it's because the leaked footage received such a fervent reaction with exactly the type of people who make the trip to geek Mecca that the movie got greenlit in the first place. But still, no footage shown at this year's Comic-Con generated a bigger response than the first trailer, with a standing ovation and "one more time" chants. The full, foul-mouthed, fourth wall-breaking trailer is online now.

Boy, it must get clammy inside that Deadpool costume.

NOTHING STAYED SECRET

19 Leaks are nothing new, but in previous years there's been an implicit understanding that what's shown in Hall H stays in Hall H. This year was different, with every major panel's exclusive footage showing up online in some form. And several big trailers – including *Doctor Who* and *Batman V Superman* – were online officially within minutes of their Comic-Con debuts. Is the era of the Comic-Con exclusive finally over?



Some kick-ass heroines are bigger than others...

GWENDOLINE CHRISTIE IS SUPERHUMAN

15 The Women Who Kick-Ass panel brought together sci-fi heroines Kathy Bates, Gwendoline Christie, Gal Gadot, Jenna Coleman and Hayley Atwell on stage, and was filled with superb moments. It also hammered home the fact that Brie of Targ is really bloomin' tall. Either that or someone cut a hole in the floor underneath Clara Oswald.

THE MARVEL DUBSMASH CIVIL WAR

16 Don't know what Dubsmash is? Er, neither did we until the casts of *Agent Carter* and *Agents Of SHIELD* started trying to one-up each other using the lip-synching app during Comic-Con. The ending is unmissable: bit.ly/CarterDubsmash.



Wouldn't it be awesome if they went in for a big kiss?

HASBRO SHOWED OFF SOME NEW STAR WARS TOYS

17 One of the best (and worst) things about Comic-Con is the raft of exclusive collectables attendees can get their hands on... if they're quick. So what better place to reveal a new range of *Star Wars* toys? A *New Hope* Luke, Ahsoka Tano, Jango Fett and Darth Revan were all shown off in Black Series form. The new range of *Star Wars* merch will go on sale from Friday 4 September. Bank accounts, brace for impact.

THE COSPLAY WAS EPIC

20 Well, of course it was.



Comic-Con wouldn't exist without this lot!





Nick Setchfield's

DEVELOPMENT HELL

Your monthly glimpse into Hollywood's hoped-for future



CORPS VALUES!

GREEN LANTERN CORPS

Yes, Warner Bros' next stab at making Green Lantern a viable blockbuster proposition will be an ensemble piece, showcasing the collective ranks of the power ring-wielding cosmic cops. *Fast & Furious* franchise player **Tyrese Gibson** is angling for the role of John Stewart, the Lantern who was DC's very first black

superhero back in 1971. "I've already had a couple of meetings at Warner Bros," Gibson tells Collider. "I do believe that there needs to be more black superheroes out there, but that's not even my motivation. I think I would be the best Green Lantern and based on my fans and supporters that spent around \$6 billion in box office receipts, I feel like there's a fanbase out there

waiting to see me put on this green suit and do my thing." **Chris Pine** was rumoured for fellow Lantern Hal Jordan but he's just signed for *Wonder Woman*, playing the Amazon's squeeze Steve Trevor.

PURE AFFLECKTATION!

BATMAN

Ben Affleck is making a serious commitment to Gotham City.

Relax – it's not the kind of commitment that involves alleyway slayings, rain-lashed vows by gravestones and serious gym time. Well, perhaps the serious gym time. He's in talks to star in, co-write and potentially direct a standalone Dark Knight adventure to follow team-up tale *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*. A lifelong Bat-geek, Affleck's set to collaborate on the

screenplay with none other than DC Comics' chief creative officer Geoff Johns, who's already notched up small-screen credits on *The Flash*, *Arrow* and *Smallville*. Big Geoff has tackled Batman in print, of course, most notably in 2012 graphic novel *Batman: Earth One*. No word on how this all fits into the DC movie meisterplan – Affleck is obliged to direct prohibition era crime drama *Live By Night* before he can return to defending the least desirable zipcode in America.

'N SICK!

DEAD 7

🔥 File this one under Reality Is Tearing Itself Apart At The Seams: former scream-addled posterboys from millennial boy bands Backstreet Boys and 'N Sync are teaming for a futuristic, zombie-infested Western/horror. Yes, we know it sounds like someone inhaling all the glue from a stack of rotting copies of *Smash Hits*. Produced by The Asylum – home to such culture-defining fare as *Sharknado* and *Asteroid Vs Earth* – the film will bring a supernatural spin to *The Magnificent Seven*, enlisting its heroes to protect a town from the shambling hordes of the undead. "They use zombies to control a post-apocalyptic town and the seven bandits basically come in and save the day," says Backstreeteer **Nick Carter**. Expect guest shots from other former '90s and noughties boy banders. Next up: Westlife in *Westdeath*.

BUSTIN' OUT ALL OVER?

GHOSTBUSTERS

🔥 Someone call Egon Spengler. We're picking up mixed signals on our PKE meter. For all the chatter about Sony's plan to forge a multi-platform, cross-franchise, spook-synergising *Ghostbusters* universe, producer **Ivan Reitman** says the studio's focus is strictly on the all-female take heading our way in 2016: "There is only one new *Ghostbusters* movie and that is the **Paul Feig** directed version coming next July, presently filming and going fantastically. The rest is just noise." But we can hear voices in the noise, Ivan.



→ **Rachel McAdams** orbiting the female lead in *Doctor Strange...*
Michael Keaton and **JK Simmons** dropping out of *Kong: Skull Island*, **Brie Larson** joining...
Tom Cruise pitching *Edge Of Tomorrow 2...*
Neil Marshall helming future-set revenge thriller *The Sentence...*
Sherlock's Jonathan Aris joining *Star Wars: Rogue One...*
Pacific Rim 2 tipped to start filming in Toronto this November...
Rob McElhenney directing *Minecraft* for Warner Bros...
Disney planning live-action remake of *The Sword In The Stone*, written by *Game Of Thrones'* **Brian Cogman**...
Michael Sheen joining **Jennifer Lawrence** and **Chris Pratt** in *Passengers*, voicing a robot...
John C Reilly signed for *Wreck-It Ralph 2...*
Dan Fogler joining *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them...*
Sunn Classic Pictures remaking **Stephen King's Cujo** as *C.U.J.O* (Canine Unit Joint Operations, don't chaknow)...
Diederik Van Rooijen helming the remake of *The Birds*...
Simon Kinberg writing *Logan's Run*...
Monster House's Gil Kenan directing videogame adap *Five Nights At Freddy's*...



“Rise and shine, Count Olaf – it's time to crawl from the grave again”

Human voices. Lost souls, perhaps. One of them sounds a lot like *Iron Man 3* screenwriter **Drew Pearce**, who says he's penned a Bible for the potential *Bustiverse*, rival male-centric movies and all: "Obviously it's top secret, but there's a gigantic bold idea that I came up with," he tells MTV. Who ya gonna call? "[**Chris Pratt** and **Channing Tatum**] are definitely the cast we've been thinking about as we approach the project."

SOLO ACT!

STAR WARS ANTHOLOGY: HAN SOLO

🔥 As a wise Corellian once said, hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid – or, indeed, the talents of *The Lego Movie's* **Phil Lord** and **Chris Miller**, signed to direct the long-rumoured Han Solo prequel. "This is the first film we've worked on that seems like a good idea to begin with," say Lord and Miller, who also managed to make *21 Jump Street* work. "We promise to take risks, to give the audience a fresh experience, and we pledge ourselves to be faithful stewards of these characters who mean so much to us. This is a dream come true for us. And not the kind of dream where you're late for work and all your clothes are made of pudding..." With a script by *The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Force Awakens* screenwriter **Lawrence Kasdan** and his son Jon, the film "focuses on how young Han Solo becomes the smuggler, thief and scoundrel whom Luke Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi first encountered in the cantina in Mos Eisley." Kessel Run ahoy!

VAMPING IT UP!

NOSFERATU

🔥 Rise and shine, Count Olaf – it's time to crawl from the grave again. But sort your nails out, mate. They're a disgrace. Yes, one of horror cinema's most potent and primal icons is thirsting for blood once more. FW Murnau first brought him to the screen in 1922's shadow-drenched classic of German expressionism *Nosferatu, Eine Symphonie Des Grauens*, a copyright-dodging take on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Klaus Kinski played him in Werner Herzog's 1979 remake *Nosferatu The Vampyre* – possibly the only time in film history an actor has actually had a scarier reputation than the wormy fright-beast he's playing. Now **Robert Eggers** – who recently wowed the Sundance Film Festival with indie horror *The Witch* – will write and direct a new version for Studio 8. If it doesn't homage the immortal crooked-shadow-on-the-stairs shot we'll eat our own black hearts.

PARKER LIFE!

SPIDER-MAN

🔥 *Vacation's* **John Francis Daley** and **Jonathan M Goldstein** are the screenwriters penning the first adventure for the new, MCU-friendly Spider-Man. And they've already nailed their take on Peter Parker. "He's a sharp kid and witty and deals with the fact that he's an outcast and a geek through humour," Daley tells NPR. "It's sort of the safety net for geeks like us, so I think we can totally relate to where he's coming from. As well as the superpowers, which we also have." Goldstein adds: "We have time to develop the powers with him and experience the wish fulfilment." They also know what they don't want to do. "I don't think the origin story is going to be in there," Daley tells *USA Today*, as the world gives a collective sigh of relief large enough to shift the Moon's orbit. "And I think we're going to avoid the emo dance [from *Spider-Man 3*]..." My Cousin Vinny's **Marisa Tomei** is in the frame for the eternally doting Aunt May. Boy, that Sanatogen stuff works wonders... ●

ILLUSTRATION BY PAUL CEMMICK

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Worlds Of SFX

There's a whole universe to explore
beyond this magazine

THIS MONTH ON
gamesradar+



Five things to look out for on our
massive entertainment portal at
gamesradar.com/sfx

1 Our cover's something of a giveaway, but *Doctor Who* is back on 19 September. Clock our extra Time Lord coverage during "Doctor Who Week", kicking off 14 September.

2 Make those last four months before *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* fly by that little bit quicker by tuning into our weekly *Star Wars* chat show *Stay On Target*, for all the latest news and analysis. bit.ly/swontarget

3 *Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials*, *Hitman: Agent 47*, *Sinister 2* and *The Visit* didn't screen in time for our print deadlines – *SFX* shakes fist at films – but keep your eyes open for reviews on *GR+* ahead of release.

4 There'll be loads of new film and TV features on *GamesRadar+* throughout the month. Recent highlights: The Greatest Movies Never Made (bit.ly/grnever), The Greatest Monster Movies Of All Time (bit.ly/grmonsters), The Creepiest *X-Files* Episodes (bit.ly/grcreepyx) and The Best TV Shows On Netflix (bit.ly/grnetflix).

5 It's a year since Bungie's vast *Destiny* exploded onto consoles. With major new expansion *The Taken King* landing on 15 September, *GR+* will be going large on the game.



Don't let TIE Fighter attacks stop you from watching *Stay On Target*.

Magazines

HORROR: THE ULTIMATE CELEBRATION



➔ Could this be the scariest magazine cover ever? Pick up our super-creepy ultimate guide to cinema screams including interviews with George Romero, Eli Roth, Bruce Campbell, Roger Corman and Tom Six, a preview of everything terrifying coming your way plus retro features on *Scream*, *Friday The 13th* and *The Omen*. There's also a definitive list of the best horror movies of all time – don't take our word for it, this was voted for by Wes Craven, John Carpenter, Tobe Hooper, Guillermo del Toro and more...
ON SALE: 28 AUGUST

CRIME SCENE: ISSUE ONE



➔ Here's something to investigate. A brand new quarterly magazine from the makers of *SFX* and *Total Film* arrives in September. Your complete guide to watercooler crime drama on TV, bestselling crime fiction and the cream of crime cinema, *Crime Scene* is packed with exclusive interviews, set reports, commentary and analysis from the best writers, as well as reviews of all the latest books and TV shows. Check out issue one for red-hot leads on *Sherlock*, *Fargo*, *Dexter*, Ian Rankin, Val McDermid, James Ellroy and more.
ON SALE: 15 SEPTEMBER

COMIC HEROES RETURNS!



➔ *Comic Heroes*: Phase 2 is coming! Re-suited and re-booted, our fan-favourite comics quarterly returns in October with a brand new-look and a new focus. Packed with previews, interviews and in-depth features on all your favourite comics, issue one will kick off with a guide to the bestselling *Star Wars* comics range, delve into Marvel's expansive *Avengers* relaunch and feature James Bond, DC's Vertigo line and include our pick of the world's coolest superheroes. It's the definitive guide to comics and graphic novels, and you'd be crackers to miss it.
ON SALE: 9 OCTOBER

TOTAL FILM



➔ *Total Film* issue 236 features a bumper San Diego Comic-Con round-up with word from the key people behind *Star Wars*, *Warcraft*, *Sherlock*, *Deadpool*, *Victor Frankenstein* and beyond. All this plus a planet-sized look at Matt Damon's *Martian* adventure, a huge *TF* interview with *Lost/Hobbit/Ant-Man* star Evangeline Lilly, news on Mr Vader's return to *Star Wars Rebels*, reviews of all the latest films to hit screens big and small, and much more. Befriend your newsgagent now! Look out for the next issue from 28 August.
ON SALE: NOW!

Next Issue

THE MARTIAN

MATT DAMON GETS LOST IN
RIDLEY SCOTT'S LATEST

Plus!*

- + The Walking Dead
- + Crimson Peak
- + Peter Capaldi
- + Star Wars
- + Pan

*All contents are subject to change. We begged them not to, but dates show no mercy.

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//// SFX HAILING FREQUENCIES OPEN! ////

First Contact



THIS MONTH'S COMMUNICATIONS MONITOR

**RICHARD EDWARDS,
EDITOR**



SFX's hailing frequencies are open in First Contact, our new-look

communications node. Because there are loads of ways you can make contact with us in the future world that is 2015 (no hoverboards, but we do have smartphones – result), it seemed outdated to focus on old-school methods of correspondence. So remember, you can get in touch via Facebook, Twitter, email and even – if you want to get nostalgic for the second millennium – pen and paper. Contact details are on the page opposite.

SFX Hot Topic *Your views on the month's big issue*

#WHAT DID YOU THINK OF TERMINATOR GENISYS?

🔗 **Pete Woolman, Facebook** While in no way a classic like the first two, I enjoyed it for what it was – a timey wimey reboot/sequel with big action setpieces. My biggest problem was that all the twists and turns had been revealed in the trailers.

🔗 **George Legg, Facebook** I liked it but I thought the trailer spoiled the heck out of it. And Kyle Reese was more of a rusted robot acting wise than any Terminator.

SFX Maybe the filmmakers should have sent a Terminator back to stop anybody from watching the trailers and getting spoiled?

🔗 **Matthew Hankinson, Facebook** I'm surprised by the backlash it's received. I thought it was really good, on par with the first two films, in

fact. I have already pre-ordered the Blu-ray.

🔗 **Deltasphere41, Twitter** I thought it better than the reviews. Arnie looks great as a Silver Fox.

🔗 **Andy Kinnear, Facebook** I enjoyed *Genisys*. Plot bonkers in places, but it's not meant to be Shakespeare. Don't examine the plot and you'll enjoy it!

SFX Don't let it off the hook! With all that "clever" multiple timeline stuff, isn't examining the plot basically the whole point of the movie?

🔗 **Andy P Meakin, Facebook** Dreadful film, which felt like a rehash of what we have seen before, only with bad cosplay actors. At the point in the film when, with three decades to work with to prevent Skynet going live, they time travel to give themselves *just 72 hours* to stop it. I just gave up caring.

🔗 **Mark Malik, Facebook** So bad it makes the Christian Bale one almost worth watching again. A reverse-engineered, cold reboot to give Schwarzenegger a guaranteed hit by simply trading on past glories.

🔗 **Dan Hawkins, Twitter** Happy to walk out after 30 mins!

Trying to work out the plot of *Terminator Genisys*.



Get in touch!

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“The PG-13 certificate has really neutered a once-edgy action thriller series”

SFX You saw all the best bits of the movie, then, Dan.

James Daykin, Twitter Sloppy mess that started out like *Back To The Future 2* and ended nearly as badly as *Lost*.

Matthew Bhikha, Facebook I wish Arnie didn't have to say "I'll be back". Classic line or millstone around his neck?

Keith Tudor, email The PG-13 certificate has really neutered a once edgy action thriller series, leaving a bland CGI mess in its place. I almost expect a new *Alien* film to be a PG animated film, or a *Predator* where the hunter becomes a "pet" to a lonely boy like a bizarre re-fashioned ET.

SFX When James Cameron made his gritty, edgy, relentless original back in '84, he was undoubtedly dreaming that kids would one day see Sarah Connor calling a ruthless killing machine "Pops".

Look out for the next SFX Hot Topic at bit.ly/SFXHotTopic



It's okay. Love... I mean science, will save the day.

#LOVE MAGIC

Howard Tripp, email Great magazine as a rule, but I was irked by the recent Soapbox by Editor Richard Edwards, who frankly should know better (in a nice way). He laments the "love is magic" storytelling shortcut which I entirely agree with.

But his badmouthing of *Interstellar* is simply incorrect and evidence that Richard has misunderstood the entire concept of the film. There was no "love is magic" here. The messages are transmitted by gravity through the fifth dimension, using a system constructed by future humans. Technobabble yes, love-magic no – by which I mean love is not in anyway overcoming the science, nor is it guiding or even influencing it.

SFX But what of the rumours that top scientists at CERN are looking for the elusive "Nolan particle" that transmits love across the universe without violating Einstein's theories of relativity?

James McConnon, email Couldn't agree more with Richard Edwards on the "love will save the day" trope in SF being really annoying. But I do have a theory on why it works works with the Cybermen. The new weirdly organic way they have of converting people, while

being more efficient in transforming large numbers quickly, has a small but significant failure rate on removing the emotions, with those with the most to lose having the highest resistance. I'd love to see this confirmed by the Doctor landing on a planet the Cybermen have colonised where there is a war going on between the fully converted and those Cybermen who retained their identities.

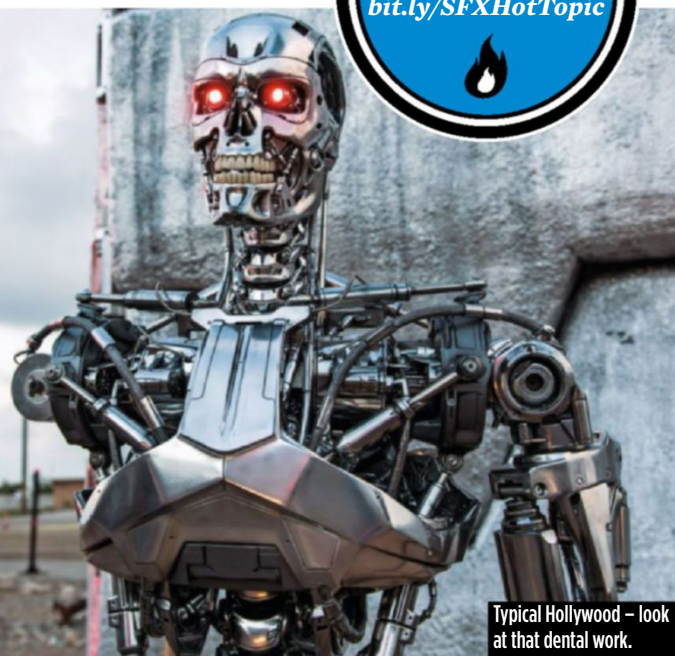
SFX As I said about *Terminator*, don't let them off the hook!

#VAUGHN AGAIN

Dave Spence, email It has come to my attention that Matthew Vaughn intends to sully *Kingsman: The Secret Service* by pandering to the appetites of our chums across the pond by creating an American Kingsman agent in the next instalment. No, Matthew, no! The film was quintessentially English in tone and humour. Bunging in an American to me would seem to be incongruous.

PS I'm Scottish so the "quintessentially English" bit was hard to write but needs must as they say.

SFX Matthew Vaughn hasn't put many feet wrong in his films so far – I think he probably knows what he's doing. →



Typical Hollywood – look at that dental work.



The real Scorpius, not some Johnny Crichton-come-lately.

#THE SCORPIUS KING

Tracey Lloyd, email In your 20th Anniversary magazine, you listed *Farscape* as one of the 20 Greatest TV Shows Of *SFX*'s Lifetime. I heartily applaud this decision, but the accompanying picture with a humorous comment about Scorpius, is in fact of John Crichton when he has visions of himself as Scorpius.

SFX You have passed the test.

#KARA SHARE

Steven Wilson, email I am really excited for the new *Supergirl* TV series – I have been a huge *Supergirl* fan for most of my life. I think it is really unfair and hurtful the comments people have been saying about the show and

Don't put a Girl down before you've even properly met her.

the cast based on the trailer. Pilots are hard to make and people should not be so quick to make harsh judgements. Not all shows have to be dark, miserable and depressing, but I get the feeling people are out for blood with *Supergirl*.

I wish people would stop with the negative comments – if it's not your kind of show then stay with *Game Of Thrones*, *Penny Dreadful* or *The Walking Dead*.

SFX *Supergirl* has got a harder ride than most, you're right. Considering the success DC has had with TV adapts like *Arrow* and *The Flash*, I reckon people should have a bit more faith.

#HE'S THE SARUMAN

Ed Reilly, email If I had to choose one moment from Sir Christopher Lee's long screen career, it would be his first appearance as Saruman in *The Fellowship Of The Ring*. We hear the voice first before we see him. That voice which graced a thousand genre movies. Here was Lee, already an avowed Tolkien fan, playing his dream role, walking down the steps of Orthanc to greet his "old friend" Gandalf. No wonder Ian McKellen seems to be in awe.

SFX Boiling Lee's wonderful career into just a few great moments is one hell of an ask, as we found for our tribute last issue. This is definitely one of the best, though – and it introduced him to a whole new generation of fans.

“If it's not your kind of show, stay with *Game Of Thrones*”

#WE ALSO HEARD FROM

Robert Graham, email Could *Dark Matter* see a long-awaited return of spaceship sci-fi shows on TV? So far it's a promising series echoing *Firefly* and seemingly turning into a modern *Blake's 7*. **SFX** We can't get enough space-set sci-fi, but the *SFX* jury's still out on this one (see p124).

Rob Frydenlund, Facebook I loved the section on spy movies in *SFX* 263 – a much underrated genre :)

Crown Jules, Twitter Living vicariously through @SFXmagazine and their #sdcc adventures. Wish I was there too!

Emma Welsby, email I just wanted to say thank you for making *The 100 Greatest TV Shows Of All Time*. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. Any chance you could do more of this in the future?

SFX There'll be loads more specials over the coming months on a variety of subjects. Look out for the return of *Comic Heroes*, and a new crime drama mag called *Crime Scene* (p31).

Dicky Crisps, Facebook Ant-Man – a small but mighty addition to the MCU. I was also glad he had an actual removable helmet instead of one of those jobbies that magically disappears into the back of your neck that everyone from *Stargate* to *Star-Lord* seems to have.

Mark and Sas, an actual old-school letter Does *Penny Dreadful* really exist? She isn't named in the list of contributors.

SFX Happy to report that she does exist – though she can only be seen when the moon and sun are in a very special alignment. More importantly, we love that you wrote in on notepaper branded with 2003 Ewan McGregor/Renee Zellweger-starrer *Down With Love*. A tribute to director Peyton Reed's *Ant-Man*?



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Your sci-fi memorabilia valued by the experts from auctioneers Vectis

Darren Hill sent us a pic of a poster for Sam Raimi's original *Spider-Man*, that was hastily withdrawn after 9/11 – the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center are reflected in Spidey's eye. "Back in 2001 near where I was working was a company that supplied publicity material to cinemas," says Darren. "This had been put in the skip after 9/11."



ADAM CARTER OF VECTIS SAYS:

"As you say, after the terrible events of 9/11 these posters were quickly withdrawn and indeed many were disposed of, proven so by your story. The one-sheet was once worth in excess of £100, even as much as £200 at its height, but today it's only worth around £40-60. The banner you have, however, is a little different. Not many of these were printed, and it is made of a heavy duty vinyl. The value of this piece is a little hard to determine such is its rarity, but I would not hesitate to put an estimate on it of between £200-300."

If you've got a piece of memorabilia you'd like us to feature, send us a photo of your item with a few words about what it means to you, to sfx@futurenet.com, using the subject line Cash In The AT-AT.

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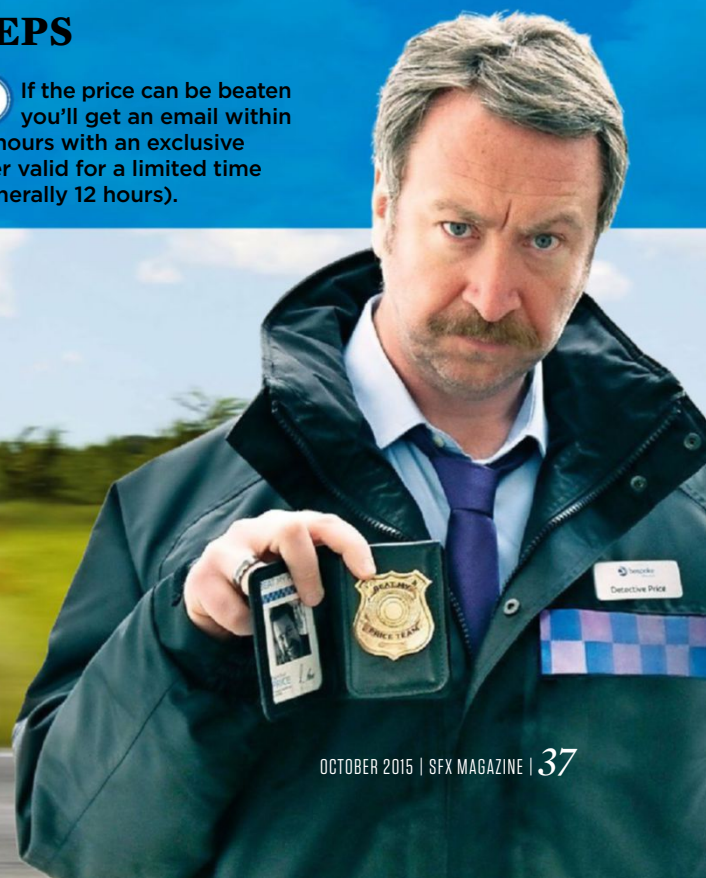
Andrew from Wales saved **14% off** Batman: Arkham Knight on PS4!



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STAR WARS: HAN SOLO

Wishlist

WHAT YOU WANT TO
SEE IN UPCOMING
MOVIES AND TV

A stuck up, half-witted, scruffy-looking nerfherder gets his own spin-off movie

YOUR TOP 5 REQUESTS

STOP COUNTING YOUR MONEY AND PAY ATTENTION LUCASFILM, SFX READERS HAVE SOME IDEAS FOR YOUR "ANTHOLOGY" MOVIE

SKIP THE ORIGIN

1 Part of what makes Han Solo so great is that he arrives fully formed. You don't want Phil Lord and Chris Miller's young Han Solo movie to shatter that mystique. "Don't show everything," says **David Wallis**. "The whole mythology of Han is story not fact, seeing will ruin that. Just tease enough with a great alternate arc we don't know."

A ROMP

2 Given all the fate-of-the-galaxy events no doubt going on in the main series **Jonathan Harvey** would like the Han Solo spin-off to be fun above all else. "Space pirates, Stormtroopers, space battles, evil Empire schemes, damsels in distress, bizarre aliens and the Millennium Falcon."

PRATTLE ON

3 Short of some boffin inventing a miraculous de-ageing machine, sadly 73-year-old Harrison Ford won't be able to play a young Han Solo, which is why **Occy Tok**

(among many) suggested the next best man for the job. "Chris Pratt would make an excellent Han Solo."

TAKE A NOVEL APPROACH

4 The expanded universe may have been relegated to the non-canon status of "Legends", but that doesn't mean Han Solo writers Lawrence and Jon Kasdan can't take inspiration from what came before. "Incorporate some of the Han Solo novel plots by Brian Daley – *Han Solo At Stars' End*, *Revenge* and *Lost Legacy*," says **Wayne Littlewood**.

LET THE WOOKIEE IN

5 Han's heterosexual life partner/walking carpet Chewbacca is a must for the Han Solo spin-off says **Laura Tisdall**, "His first meeting with Chewie would be magical." While **Mark Lewis** adds, "Have the friendship between Han and Chewie forged in the crucible of some seemingly hopeless battle. High drama, laser fire, what more do you want?"

And that's not all they want... ↴

→ **Craig Oxbrow** Can we skip the origin and have a (young) Han Solo adventure instead? Sure, it can start with him stealing the Falcon from Lando or meeting Chewbacca or something, then get to the important business of flying around in space and dodging bad guys and arguing with Jabba and shooting first.

→ **John Bromley** The ability for Harrison Ford to film a scene for it without injuring himself.

→ **James Wetherell** It not to happen.

→ **Warren Slack** Er, a Jedi.

→ **Andy Kinnear** Oh bloody hell, *X-Men Origins*, *Star Wars* style? Didn't they learn anything from the prequels? Bratty 90210 Anakin Vader was more than

enough. New stories, new characters, NEW IDEAS please!

→ **Keith Heeney** Let's see the story behind the little known conflict between father and son when Napoleon drove Han away into a life of roguish behaviour!

→ **David Peters** Sana Solo – Han's first wife from the comics.

→ **Ian Gleeson** If it hasn't got Harrison Ford in not interested, he is what made Han Solo – fact!

→ **Professor S Thorn** Jennifer Lawrence, Robert De Niro and Bradley Cooper... What do you mean they're not in it?

→ **Hazeydavey69** Official origin of the "Corellian Bloodstripe" he has on trousers in *A New Hope*.

→ **Stuart Kershaw** Adapt or

take inspiration from the Brian Daley novels.

→ **Simon Charlott** Maybe get Harrison Ford to be in character as Han Solo at the start of the movie and get him to tell the story.

→ **Ian Gleeson** If Harrison Ford isn't Han Solo I'd like to see a chorus line in it, cause it will be a joke anyway!

→ **Shane Lowe** Tie it into *Rebels* by having Ezra, Kanan and Ahsoka show up.

→ **Libby Pearson** Don't cast Han too young, I don't want to see my biggest childhood crush as a cocky teen.

→ **Nicole Gray** Reveal that Han and Boba Fett worked together for Jabba. It could add meaning to their encounters in later films.





YOUR DREAM CAST

CHEWBACCA

Peter Mayhew

BOBA FETT

Michael Fassbender

HAN SOLO

Chris Pratt

LANDO

Michael B Jordan

SANA SOLO

Danai Gurira

COMING SOON DOCTOR STRANGE AND THE JURASSIC WORLD SEQUEL

Marvel's sorcerer supreme hits Wishlist next issue and in two months' time there's the inevitable follow-up to the dino hit.

See bit.ly/SFXwishlist for details.

THE RINGWORLD ENGINEERS *by Larry Niven, 1980*

Gareth L Powell says hurrah for the misfits and oddballs



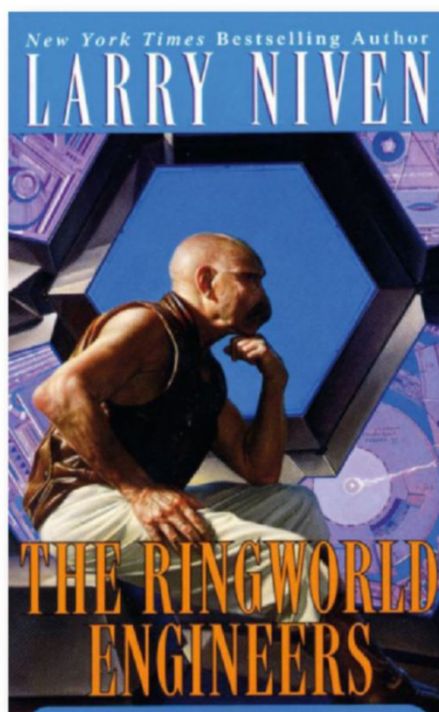
Thinking about *The Ringworld Engineers* takes me back to the moment I first pulled the hardback from the shelf of my local village library on a hot and dusty

afternoon in the early 1980s. The fact it was a sequel didn't matter. A brief introductory note told me everything I needed to know about the first book, and enabled me to dive right in. I was 10 or 11 years old, and the story that followed blew my mind. The pages were full of beautiful vampires, flying cities, carnivorous sunflowers, ancient libraries and dangerous aliens. And all the action took place on a hoop encircling a sun, with a surface area a trillion times that of the Earth!

As an 11-year-old, this book literally changed the way I thought about the world. Getting my head around the physics rekindled my fascination with science and learning, and the main character's insatiable curiosity prompted me to take another look at things I had hitherto taken for granted, from tin openers to internal combustion engines.

The viewpoint character in the book is Louis Wu, a 200-year-old Earthman addicted to the electrical stimulation of his brain's pleasure centres. Twenty years have passed since his first expedition to the Ringworld. Now, he finds himself kidnapped by a mad alien Puppeteer and compelled to return.

Louis is an interesting mix of the old and new. In part, he is one of the old-fashioned, self-reliant and capable heroes of science fiction, able to solve any problem. But there's more to him than that. He has flaws, and struggles to overcome his addiction and readjust to life without artificial stimulation.



Louis's fellow abductee is Chmee, a diplomat from the fearsome and tiger-like Kzinti race. Together, they are held prisoner until their arrival in the Ringworld system, at which point they discover something has gone terribly awry. The giant, hoop-like structure is off-centre, orbiting its sun like a hula-hoop wobbling around the waist of a dancer. Left to its own devices, the ring's inner edge will eventually scrape against the star, killing its trillion or so inhabitants.

The remainder of the book follows Louis, Chmee and their captor as they travel across the Ringworld in search of the mechanisms to stabilise its orbit before disaster can strike, and to discover the identity of its builders, the eponymous Ringworld Engineers.

In his introduction, Niven says that he hadn't the slightest intention of writing a sequel to *Ringworld*, but 10 years' worth of letters from readers finally convinced him otherwise. Apparently fans had been quick to determine the structure's inherent instability, and so Niven felt duty-bound to write the second book to address and solve the problem.

And thank goodness he did! *The Ringworld Engineers* is the book the Ringworld deserves. The first volume barely scratched the surface; whereas here, we finally catch a glimpse of the machinery that maintains this vast and gaudy artifact, and gain a better appreciation of its scale. We also come face-to-face with a member of the race responsible for constructing the Ringworld in the first place.

The Ringworld Engineers was nominated for both the Hugo and Locus awards. Niven has since written two further sequels, *The Ringworld Throne* (1996) and *Ringworld's Children* (2004), but neither lives up to the exuberance and sense-of-wonder displayed in *The Ringworld Engineers*. ●

Gareth L Powell is the author of the acclaimed Ack-Ack Macaque book series.

Like this? Try these!

MANIFOLD: SPACE by **STEPHEN BAXTER** (2000)

→ Robotic aliens arrive in the solar system but seem to have no interest in talking to the people of Earth, and it's up to a former NASA astronaut to make contact.



REVELATION SPACE by **ALASTAIR REYNOLDS** (2000)

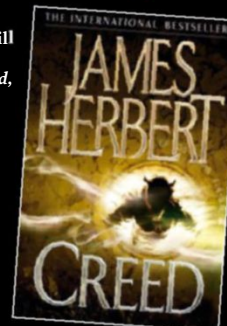
→ In a universe filled with the ruins of older, vanished civilisations, gothic spacers travel between worlds in vast, fading "lighthuggers", their lifetimes stretched by relativistic time dilation.



NEXT ISSUE

Join us in SFX 266, when Derek Landy will be writing about James Herbert's *Creed*, the horror master's 1983 book about a sleazy photographer who meets monsters.

If you've not read it before (or you've been planning on re-reading it), this is your chance to see what a top novelist thinks of a genre classic.



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Penny Dreadful

SFX's high priestess of horror

DEATH COMES TO COMIC-CON

San Diego Comic-Con 2015. Hall H, Saturday. I've snuck in on a press pass, laden with laptop and I'm squeezed in with 6,000 other poor sods who've queued all night – they came for *Batman V Superman* but suddenly the venue has been taken over by horror. With starry panels and brand new footage, *Crimson Peak*, *Victor Frankenstein* and *Pride And Prejudice And Zombies* wowing the Con seemed to indicate that the next big thing in horror fandom might, bizarrely, be 19th century England. Packed with posh Brit totty (Tom Hiddleston in *Peaks*, James McAvoy and Daniel Radcliffe in *Frankenstein*, Douglas Booth, Matt Smith and Sam Riley in *P&P&Z*), they feature stiff upper lips, sharp suits, deadpan one-liners and sizzling sexual tension (along with a half-dead rat monster, long-fingered house ghouls and the fetid undead in crinoline). Did the wild success of *Twilight* convince execs that hot Brit poshos + mild peril = big bucks? And will these films be any good? I'm guessing "yes", "sort of" and "no" in that order.

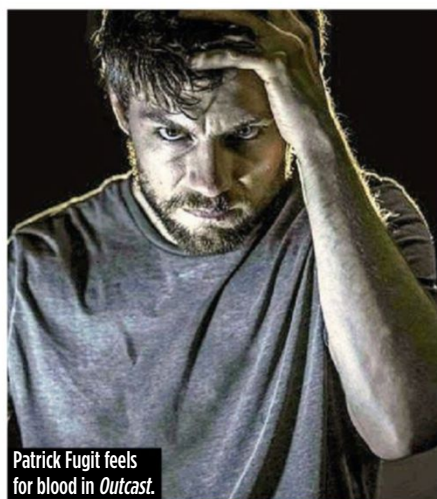
THE MONSTER INSIDE

It's still the Americans who rule telly. Also teased at SDCC was the brand new show from *Walking Dead* comic creator Robert Kirkman, which promises to do for demons what *WD* did for zombies. *Outcast* features Patrick Fugit as a young bloke plagued by demonic possession; *Life On Mars* star Philip Glenister is the Reverend trying to guide him and help uncover other metaphorical demons from his past. Trailer looks pretty scary – dark and gothic, with some freaky levitation bits – while the pilot's helmed by *You're Next* director Adam Wingard. Expect it to possess you in 2016.

NIGHT TERROR

The scariest thing I've seen this month is a documentary; the Big Bad is your brain. *The Nightmare* follows eight people who suffer from debilitating sleep paralysis which leaves them in a state between sleep and waking, seemingly conscious and in their beds, unable to move and haunted by shadowy figures. The doc recreates these episodes putting it somewhere between a lo-fi but terrifying

Dreams, nightmares,
Brits in nice suits
and a doll called Bob.
Sort of...



Patrick Fugit feels for blood in *Outcast*.



Pride And Prejudice And Zombies – and mean swordplay.



Mia Wasikowska blends in with *Crimson Peak*'s milieu.

horror film and a slightly undercooked doc – an hour and a half of strangers telling you what they dreamed. Only it's neither, in fact it's a fascinating look at unexplained universal fear tropes and how you can be tortured by your own mind. Ripe for a really good horror movie...

DREAM PROJECT

...and this isn't it. Yet the new film from Mike Flanagan, the guy who made *Oculus*, also focuses on sleep problems. *Before I Wake* follows a boy whose dreams manifest in reality when he sleeps – Kate Bosworth and Thomas Jane star as the couple who adopt him after their own son dies. I'm a big fan of Flanagan and despite the "Nightmare On Elm Street knock off" synopsis the trailer looks amazing: the gorgeousness of the good dreams – butterflies, twinkling lights, the missing child resurrected – and the unrestricted freakishness of the bad ones. It doesn't need to be just one baddie – the mind is full of all sorts of horrible stuff! It's out in the US in September.

WHAT ABOUT BOB?

There's a new name in terror and it's *Robert!* The latest *Annabelle* cash in is this weird-looking eponymous straight to DVD chiller, (out 24 August) made by a Welsh indie production house and based on the "true" story of the doll which inspired Chucky. So *Robert* isn't the most obvious choice for a horror movie title. Neither were *Patrick*, *Martin* or *Colin*...

Dreadful thing to do

Check out vintage posters from iconic horror artist Graham Humphreys at the Proud Gallery in Camden from 29 October until 22 November in his new exhibition "Drawing Blood". Humphreys designed multiple video nasties era promos including the UK posters for *The Evil Dead*, *Basket Case* and *A Nightmare On Elm Street*. Can't make the exhibition? Check out Humphreys' work in a new limited edition art book available to pre-order here: <http://bit.ly/grahamhumphreys>.



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LOOKING BACKWARD

David Langford traces a history of SF fandom



**“AN ALLEYWAY
IN THE DAY OF
THE TRIFFIDS
NOW PROUDLY
BEARS THE SIGN
TRIFFID ALLEY”**

→ Illustration by Andy Watt

There's no blue plaque on John Wyndham's house, but now he has a memorial in South End Green, London. A nameless alleyway dedicated to wheelie-bin storage and identified as an escape route used in *The Day Of The Triffids* now proudly bears the sign Triffid Alley. They missed a trick by not repeating the name in Braille.

Maybe one day there'll be a plaque at 32 Thorold Road, Ilford, which on 27 October 1930 housed the inaugural meeting of the Ilford Science Literary Circle – Britain's first SF fan group! Tea and crumpets were served, contemporary SF was read aloud, and history was made by a turnout of just six people. No, I wasn't there, but I read the crib-sheet. The history of SF fandom is a deeply arcane subject, and for ages the only references were by Americans – such as Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm* from 1954, telling in prose of epic clunkiness the story of US fandom from the 1920s until World War II. Which, after Moskowitz's impassioned descriptions of apocalyptic fan feuds and fan-political purges, seemed almost an anticlimax.

History is full of oddments that escaped the history books, and the SF fan world is especially hard to track because so much early data appeared in low-circulation fanzines which, once their owners died, were promptly binned by a loving family. Much had been forgotten, but in the 1980s UK fan history received a shot in the arm. Young fan Rob Hansen teamed up with golden oldie Vince Clarke – who'd been active in 1930s UK fandom, dropped out in 1960, and 20-odd years later returned with his vast archive of fannish documents and photos still intact.

The curtain is here lowered and raised again to skip over years of numbing research that spawned Rob Hansen's *THEN: A History Of Science Fiction Fandom In The UK*, published as four hefty fanzine-format volumes from 1988 to 1993. Various tidied versions have been online since about 1995, and this year saw an ebook. Rob is currently working on the expanded edition.

One surprise was the revelation that British fandom had mislaid a convention. According to the official record, three 1950s Eastercons were held at the George Hotel in Kettering (still shamefully denied its rightful blue plaque). Rob discovered a fourth, plunging the historical sequence into chaos because the 1971 “Eastercon 22” suddenly became the 23rd Eastercon. Numerical sanity was only restored by Jesuitically declaring the 1951 convention to be a special international event, listed among Eastercons *but without a number*. Phew, that was a close one.

Another blue plaque candidate identified in *THEN* is 88 Gray's Inn Road, London, home of The Flat – a short-lived SF powerhouse where Arthur C Clarke and two fan friends lived at the end of the 1930s, and hosted the first meetings of the British Interplanetary Society. One of the Flat denizens, SF author William F Temple, wrote a whole novel about their bizarre domestic life, eventually published in 2000 as *88 Gray's Inn Road: A Living-Space Odyssey*. It's fun.

Personally I thought *THEN* got really exciting in the 1970s volume when at last my own name turned up; but not everyone regards this as the climax of The Decline and Fall of the Fannish Empire. No blue plaque for Mr Hansen, whose greatest accolade was to be mistyped in Brian Aldiss's autobiography: “the historian of fanzines, Rob Hanson”. Way to go, Rob. ●

David Langford had a sevagram once, but the multiverses fell off.

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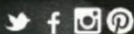
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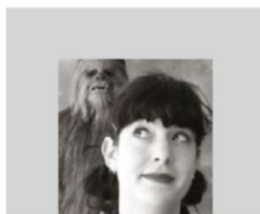


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BRING ON THE CON!

Bonnie Burton on the joy of conventions



“I’M A BIG FAN
OF ANY CON
WHERE I CAN
PLAY D&D WITH
STRANGERS
AT 3AM”

→ Illustration by Maria Colino

Crowds of Klingons drinking beer; comic book writers answering fans’ burning questions; chatting with Jedi Knights while in the line for the loo. These are some of the best parts of attending a sci-fi convention. I’ve been attending San Diego Comic-Con International, one of the largest pop culture conventions in the world, for over 20 years. Back in the ’90s it was a much smaller affair, with short lines for artist and writer signings and a lot fewer fans in cosplay roaming the halls.

Now Comic-Con is a madhouse of frenzied fans standing in long queues just to catch a glimpse of their favourite celebrities. The convention is less about comics themselves than it is about the movies, TV shows and videogames they spawn.

More than 100,000 fans attended Comic-Con in 2015, and I’m fairly certain all of them stepped on my foot at some point. But it’s worth all the pain, noise and crowds. Not only do I love going to San Diego Comic-Con, I also attend about ten conventions a year around the world to sign my books and comics, sit on panels, report on entertainment news and hang out with my fellow fans.

Have you always wanted a photo of yourself and the cast of *Doctor Who*? Or maybe you want to give actress Lucy Lawless a high-five for inspiring you to write *Xena* fan fiction. Or perhaps you just want to breathe the same air as Benedict Cumberbatch? Then you should find out which celebrities are offering one-on-one signings and photo opportunities. The celebrities at most cons run the gamut from A-listers to that guy who played one of the slain Ewoks at the Battle of Endor.

The best conventions also offer 24-hour themed rooms where fans can go to play tabletop games, network with budding artists and writers or watch sci-fi movie marathons. These rooms are great for when the rest of the con – panels, exhibits, and vendor booths – ends for the day and you have nothing planned for the evening. I’m a big fan of any convention where I can sit in a comfy chair and play *D&D* with like-minded strangers at 3am.

That’s what makes going to a convention so much fun: meeting and chatting with fellow fans. Standing in long lines for panels and signings would be unbearable if it weren’t for the great discussions I’ve had with people while we waited. I once met a professional psychic in a line for a *Twin Peaks* panel. Another time I had a lively discussion with a surgeon about the real-life possibilities of Luke Skywalker’s bionic arm while I was waiting to get a *Star Wars* novel signed. Random conversations like these make conventions extra special.

If you’re looking for that Holy Grail kind of item for your collection – whether it be tin robot toys or a mint-condition TARDIS teapot – a comic book con could be the ideal place to hunt. It’s also a great place to locate hard-to-find DVDs of retro TV series like *Space Precinct* and *UFO*. That’s how I got my hands on a DVD of the *Star Wars Holiday Special* complete with the original TV ads during the breaks.

I also took my parents to their first convention last year. They were confused why so many people looked “dirty, dishevelled and in pain,” as my step-mom put it. “Those are zombie cosplayers!” I explained. They looked unconvinced.

We should all make a point of attending at least one con this year. There’s so much to see and do, and it’s a great excuse to dress up as Spider-Man without having to explain why. ●

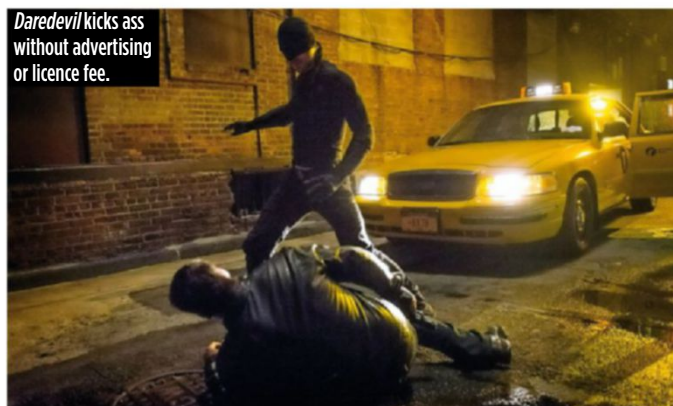
Bonnie has a book of sketches where she’s asked artists at cons to draw R2-D2 in love.



FREESPEAK

WHERE WRITERS AND OPINIONS COLLIDE

Russell Lewin thinks it's time to appreciate a golden age of sci-fi



Daredevil kicks ass without advertising or licence fee.

Let no one say that we're not in a golden age for the quantity and quality of sci-fi products, and that it's not easy to access them. Your choice of TV and films is wider than it's ever been, and it's not seizing up any time soon.

First up: movies. Both big and small are thriving. At the top you've got Marvel/Disney, currently planning epics till 2019. (Thank goodness film companies are allowed to get massive.) At the lower end, technology – made cheaper by increased competition, economies of scale, productivity improvements and Moore's law – allows creatives to both shoot and distribute their product affordably.

Plus, UK-made films now qualify for 25% tax relief, and this has seen Britain become Hollywood's favourite foreign destination to shoot. The BFI says 2014's record year for the UK film industry was thanks to tax relief policies. (There's also been an upsurge in investment in videogames, as since 2014 UK videogames companies have also been able to claim tax relief up to 25% on their production costs.)

Cinemas are being deluged: as *Sight & Sound* noted recently, two

decades ago a typical week would see five or six new releases in the UK. Now it tends to be around 15, and in the first weekend of May this year it was 24. According to the UK Cinema Association, there are now 500 more screens in Britain than there were 10 years ago (3,947).

What of television? The new guys on the block are expanding choice without foregoing quality. Netflix and Amazon Prime are making *Daredevil*, *Hemlock Grove*, *Sense8* and more. These guys and cable companies like *Game Of Thrones* stable HBO should reassure us that quality TV will still be around when the BBC's licence fee has withered further.

Then there's YouTube. I've just typed "1950s sci-fi movies" into its search box and hundreds of movies have come up on the first page alone. We're spoilt!

I haven't even mentioned the various virtues of Kickstarter, collectable merchandise, film preservation, Sky+, Secret Cinema, instant downloads, Blu-ray... but you get the message: thanks to talent being set free in the open market and the democratisation of demand, sci-fi fans are enjoying a golden age. Appreciate it. ●

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"I don't want to see the Thing's rocky outcrop"

THE
MIGHTY TV
PREVIEW

AS THE DOCTOR AND
CLARA EMBARK ON MORE
FANTASTIC JOURNEYS, STEVEN
MOFFAT TELLS NICK SETCHFIELD
"DOCTOR WHO IS A MADNESS"

ADVENTURE TIME



S

Steven Moffat thinks outside the box.

Not just any old box. This particular box is blue, battered and beloved, maybe just a little obsolete and incongruous around the edges. Outside its doors you'll find the future and the past, possibly the present. There'll be something nasty in the dark, just you see. Terror, dread, dire peril, all that good stuff. Daleks? You

never know your luck in this cruel and merciless universe. The sane response, naturally, would be to high-tail it back inside the box and hit the dematerialisation switch.

But it's Saturday. It's BBC One. No one wants to watch the sane response.

"This year it's more about the glory years of the Doctor and Clara," the showrunner tells *SFX*, teeing up the TARDIS's imminent return. "It feels tonally quite different, in a way that a new series of *Doctor Who* should always feel tonally different from the one you've just watched."

The latest series – the ninth since the show returned a decade ago – will hurl Peter Capaldi's Time Lord and Jenna Coleman's human go-between into a breathless run of adventures. We're promised Vikings, highwaymen, ghost-haunted seas, global threats, new worlds, old worlds, fresh monsters and familiar fearsome favourites.

"They're having the best of fun, but they earned that friendship through the last series. Now they're doing what you really ought to be doing if you've got access to a time and space machine: having the time of your bloody life..."



So these are the glory years for the Doctor and Clara. Does that shape the kind of stories you're telling this series?

➤ It's more their attitude to the stories. Obviously *Doctor Who* is all about death, destruction, terrible villains, huge threats, fear... So what do you think about that? Are you having an argument about the moral implications? Or are you diving in and getting an adrenaline rush from it? Clara, in a ➔



Jenna Coleman's Clara Oswald will be getting out and about even more this time around.

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Where in the world –
or universe – has he
landed this time?

DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

PETER CAPALDI talks monsters, Maisie and how his character is changing

How has your Doctor evolved this series?

→ I think he's moving. What I find interesting is that the Doctor is still sort of looking for himself. So he's changed to some degree. He still has the same concerns and worries and darkness, if you like, but he's embracing the present. But that's really because he has a profound knowledge of the past and the future. He knows things can often end in great distress but rather than focusing on that he's decided to have a good time. It doesn't mean that he's not aware that darkness will fall... or whatever phrase I can think of that you can print that sounds good!

How was it sharing a couple of episodes with Maisie Williams?

→ I'm a huge *Game Of Thrones* fan, so I was very excited for Maisie. She amuses me, incredibly. She's very gifted. You'll see what she does in the show. She has to be quite different in different episodes, and she does it quite beautifully and subtly. At the same time you can get *Game Of Thrones* gossip off her... without any spoilers! She starts telling me, and then she starts revealing things, and I don't want to know what's happened so I get her to be quiet.

Maisie Williams plays a "brand new character", according to Moffat.



You get to fight the Zygons this year...

→ They're fantastic monsters, aren't they? I worked with the man who [originally] designed them, Jim Acheson, who became a very, very celebrated costume designer. I was in the film of *Dangerous Liaisons*, which he did all these fabulous 18th century costumes for. And all I wanted to talk to him about was Zygons. He was slightly embarrassed, I think...

Is there a monster from *Doctor Who's* past you'd love to face?

→ There are so many of them. Often if I'm asked that question I pick the most obscure one, like the Chumblies! I would like the Daemons, because they're a little bit black magicky, they're a little bit supernatural. I like monsters that are not just sci-fi but who have got a horror movie kind of element to them. And the Axons would be good. Steven always says they've got a face like a Bafta. He's got plenty of Baftas... perhaps he's sick of them!



Chumblies from Hartnell tale "Galaxy 4".

How much of a sway do you actually have with Steven over stuff like this?

None!
Nick Setchfield

dangerous way, has acknowledged that beneath that prim and proper teacher is a proper thrill-seeker. And that's what the Doctor has always been. They surf along on all these terrible events – properly morally engaged, but still enjoying the living hell out of them.

You've said you're writing the Doctor as a funnier character this year. Were you looking to lighten him up or is that just the way the scripts came?

🕒 I say these things and they get hung around my neck for the rest of time! He's more relaxed about certain things, more relaxed about his relationship with Clara. He spent series one trying to deny that he is sort of besotted with her. In a lovely, non-sexual way, of course, but he properly crushes on her – again, in a non-creepy way. So, now that he's acknowledged that, he's more relaxed. And he's no longer worrying about whether he's supposed to be a good man or whatever. He's just an idiot with a box and he's trying to have as much fun as possible. Still in his grumpy, unsociable way.

You really played with that brusque, prickly side of the Doctor last series...

🕒 Yes, and it's still there – he's still like that. He doesn't understand that people find that offensive. He wasn't intentionally being rude to anyone – he was just wondering why everyone got so upset! If you look at the previous Doctors they were also socially inept. They were just socially inept in slightly different ways. Matt's Doctor would turn up naked at Christmas and kiss the wrong people. There's a sort of social disengagement with the Doctor at all times. And this time around he sort of got bored of being charming all the time.

Does that feel like a risk, given most TV is powered by charming characters?

🕒 There are characters who are actually being charming and there are characters who charm us. We're charmed by House in *House*, even though he is charmless. People who have no clue about that kind of thing are fundamentally interesting. *Sherlock* is an example of that too. The lack of filter on them can be bemusing and



charm – especially to children – is that the Doctor always behaves like some variety of kid. Capaldi's rudeness is the rudeness of a child, who hasn't really understood that's not what you say to people. And Clara's still having to be his human interface. This year she gives him little cards that he can use as prompt sheets for when he gets things wrong – how to talk to the bereaved and so on. In a way the other Doctors needed them too. They might have needed to have different things written on the cards...

Jenna Coleman really came into her own last year. What does this series give her?

🕒 It's an amazing series for Clara. She's in a different place. Last year she was – in her quite controlling way – saying, "There's my boyfriend and my job, there's my Doctor and my time machine, and I'll just keep them in their separate boxes." And now she's thinking,

exciting. It gives an illusion of honesty, I think – it isn't really, it's just another set of neuroses. I didn't really worry about it because I don't think that's how the Doctor operates. There's possibly less of a filter with Peter's Doctor. The

"You know what, teaching's just what I do for a living – I'm good at it, that's fine, but really my heart is in running away in time and space and having huge adventures." She gets on hugely well with the Doctor but at the same time she's slightly irritated by him. He keeps saying that he has a duty of care to her but she's saying, "I'm not actually asking you to – this is what I want. I want to have the adventures." That's about the only remaining tension. And, you know, she sorts his head out from time to time, which is nice for both characters.

You've got the return of Missy in the opening story. We take it you couldn't wait to bring her back?

🕒 Obviously I thought she was such an amazing hit that I wanted to write her again, but the truth is, as I was planning the first story I realised she fitted into it really well, and would give us a different way of looking at her, so I was automatically excited about that. But *Doctor Who* has always capitalised on its successes. That's what it does. If we roll out a good monster we roll them back in again. Missy's been one of our biggest hits in recent times so yeah, of course you're going to see her again. And I wanted to get back to the idea that the Master isn't a character who comes in and has a story every now and then. That character should turn up quite often, causing trouble – but in different ways.





At least he hasn't landed in the middle of a motorway.

“I actually feel quite strongly that there is only so far you can go”

You've given us a female Master, a secret incarnation of the Doctor and shown us the soul of the TARDIS, all of which would have felt like forbidden territory once. How brave can you be with the show? Is everything fair game or do you feel like the temporary custodian, terrified of breaking something?

☛ I think there's a duality to that. You have to treat the show like you own it. I don't just mean me – I mean every writer, every director and every actor that comes onto this show. I'm always saying, “It's not a fancy heirloom. You're not carrying this carefully to the next room. You've got to engage with it like you own it, otherwise it's not a TV show, it's a perfectly tended mausoleum.” At the same time I actually feel quite strongly that there is only so far you can go. Secret incarnation of the Doctor? That's the one that gave me an anxiety attack! The moment I pitched it, everyone else involved in the show immediately leapt up and down and said, “This is great! You can do this! This is the thing that can make the 50th special!” And I was the one going, “Oh no! I'm changing the numbering! What are we going to do? What if someone's got tattoos with numbers on them of all the Doctors? What's going to happen to them?” [laughs]. I sweated blood over that one!

You gave us some cheeky hints at the Doctor's childhood in “Listen”...

☛ There were moments in “Listen” where I thought “How far can you go here?” I was very careful that we never saw the little boy's face or, indeed, said that it was definitely him. You →

HOPE AND GLORY

STEVEN MOFFAT talks us through *Doctor Who* series nine

→ “The opening two-parter is a good one for not letting you know where the story's going to jump. In effect it starts with the Doctor going missing – it's a search for the Doctor, and it gets quite *Star Wars*-y during that. Then there's a brilliant underwater base in the next story – it's about time we had an underwater base! – plagued by ghosts. I've always wanted to do ghosts in *Doctor Who*. Ghosts plus time travel always strikes me as a very strange idea. You could meet your own ghost... The opening episodes, the first four,

are quite a tumult of events – you don't settle for a moment.

“After that you've got one by me and Jamie Mathieson, which is about Vikings, where you meet the Maisie Williams character. It's a really good Doctor-Clara one, that one. It's quite emotional.

“Then Cath Tregenna comes in and gives us a brilliant story with Rufus Hound as a highwayman – and a very different take on *Doctor Who*. She's written such an eloquent and heartfelt and very character-driven episode. An unusual episode for us. Then



Jemma Redgrave returns as Kate Stewart.

there's a two-part Zygon story, which feels like we did a finale in the middle of the show. It's got that kind of scale and gravitas and fun. And real drama. Sometimes you can do things in the middle of a show, or at the end of a show, that you can't do in the first few episodes,

which have to be quite inviting. This one is maybe a bit more challenging. It's written by Peter Harness – and

me, a bit. It's a sort of global urban thriller, quite different in tone from anything we've done before. It's an idea I had ages ago. I constructed, in part, the 50th anniversary

story as a prequel for it, as a prologue [laughs]! You'll see the set-up. This is not a short-term plan. This plan's been around forever.

“Episode nine is a very unusual idea from Mark Gatiss. It's a very unique idea for *Doctor Who*. I think it's terrific. Episode

ten is by Sarah Dollard, who's a terrific new writer – she worked with Toby Whithouse on *The Game* – and she's given us a terrific idea. This one leapt out at me as ‘Why haven't we done this already? This is so *Doctor Who* we should be doing this immediately!’ She's a great new *Doctor Who* writer, which is very exciting. And then we're into the finale, episodes 11 and 12... That was a challenge [laughs]! I'm not saying very much about them, but there's plenty to say, god knows!”

New monsters for episode five.

Michelle Gomez's Missy returns, purpler than ever.

“The great thing about *Doctor Who* is that it's a chaos of a series”

don't know. If you choose to reject that as an idea then you can fantasise that it's somebody else. The boyhood of the Doctor is something I've always definitively rejected from everybody else. You're not supposed to know. I wrote that scene several times, just trying to get it right. You don't see his face. You know very little about what he's doing, why he's there, what he's crying about, any of those things... they all have to remain secret. So we don't really tell you anything more than you'd hear from Jon Pertwee, talking about the hermit on the hill in “The Time Monster”. That feels right. You can't reveal his name, you can't reveal what set him on his way, you can't do those things, because if you tried the audience would simply reject them as not true.

You've got more two-parters this year. What does that do to the rhythm of the series?

🔗 The 45-minute format served us incredibly well for 10 years – let's not decry them – but you almost had a muscle memory of where those 45 minutes would go. You'd think, “Ah, it's time for the hero music, time for the Doctor to have his epiphany, time for the running to start...” Aside from having a lot more two-

parters this time, we blur the lines between what's a two-parter and what's not: taking one strand of plot over two stories, that kind of thing. So you don't quite know that everything is going to wrap up when you hit 43 minutes. I thought that was becoming predictable. The only thing I ever missed in the 45-minute version of *Doctor Who* was that first episode feeling from the old series, where it's sort of slow and ominous, like the first episode of “The Ark In Space”, where the Doctor wanders around and nothing really happens. It's utterly creepy, utterly involving, and yet the story doesn't start for the full 25 minutes. With 45 minutes you have to be quite definitive. By the end of the pre-titles you've said, “This week it's going to be like this.” With a two-parter you don't know which way we're going to jump for a longer period, which is quite exciting.

Does it shake you up creatively?

🔗 It refreshes us all. It changes our heads. If you do the same thing every year you get better at it but you also get duller. You get very expert, and expertise, while reassuring, is also slightly boring. The moment the series feels reliable isn't the point where you think, “I have to



Resting between being one of the most evil beings in the universe.

watch it again.” The great thing about *Doctor Who* is that it's a chaos of a series. You never quite know which one you're going to love. You're never sure which one you're going to hate. With most other shows you think, “I know what this show is like, and it will be like that again this week – I know who's going to be in it, what sets I'm going to be looking at, how many guest characters there will be...” *Doctor Who* is a madness. So you have these extremes of reactions. You say “I absolutely hated that episode” to your best *Doctor Who* fan mate whose favourite it was. That, I think, typifies *Doctor Who*. It's chaotic, it spikes and troughs all over the place. You don't know what you're going to get. And that's not something I'm trying to suggest that we brought to it. That's something that's been true of *Doctor Who* since it started. ●

Doctor Who returns to BBC One on 19 September. Read an exclusive, in-depth interview with Peter Capaldi next issue!

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JENNA COLEMAN

Doctor Who's Impossible Girl makes us believe anything is possible

Words by Joseph McCabe // Photography by BBC

Few companions in *Doctor Who* history have played a role as pivotal as that of Jenna Coleman's Clara Oswald. Serving as the bridge between Matt Smith and Peter Capaldi's vastly different Time Lords, Coleman was the only companion (discounting Billie Piper's "Moment") to work with John Hurt's War Doctor and star in the Fiftieth Anniversary Special. But time travel has yet to take its toll on Coleman, who's on a break from shooting the show's ninth series when *SFX* sits down to chat with her at this year's San Diego Comic-Con. In fact she looks considerably more relaxed than when she first appeared at the pop-culture mecca two years ago. But having logged even more hours in the TARDIS than Capaldi, who's joined her today in the States, it's no wonder she appears as confident as Clara – who, we soon learn, plays an even more active role in the Doctor's latest adventures...

How has Clara's relationship with the Doctor changed this year?

☛ In a way she's not divided between life on Earth anymore and life in the TARDIS. She's in the TARDIS full headfirst, chasing adventure, and wants to see the universe and hang out with her best mate. So it's quite freeing, and the whole series is much more the glory days of Clara and the Doctor. Which of course makes it more dangerous in time.

Is she still recovering from Danny Pink's death?

☛ I don't think she's recovered. It's changed her and it's changed her perspective. In a way she doesn't fear as much because she's got nothing to lose anymore. Because she's kind of lost everything; and luckily the Doctor came back. But I think she no longer fears her own mortality in a way. Which obviously makes her a very reckless companion.

How else does this year differ from last?

☛ We're doing two-parter this year, so there's a lot of cliffhangers. It's allowed us to just really invest in the worlds of each two-parter, and also the supporting characters as well that come and join us for each adventure. It's given us a lot more breathing space. There's a lot of quite self-contained [stories] obviously, as always. But you've got that weaving, other thing which is gonna explode in the finale, no doubt.

Were you surprised by how brusque the new Doctor could be?

☛ No. It's really funny, all the stuff with him just ripping Clara to pieces. In read-throughs you'd be reading it and... What was that thing he said? My face was "as wide as three mirrors." So you'd sit reading it and you'd look up at Steven [Moffat] and he just looks at you and goes, "Sorry." [Laughs]

Is the Doctor really Steven?

☛ In lots of ways, yes [laughs]. It's his voice – his jokes and his humour. I think Steven has spent years imagining that he is the Doctor. It's imbued in his writing. The voice is obviously very different for Peter's Doctor, but I love the fact that it's turned on its head. Because in a way Clara had it quite easy with the Eleventh, and the fact that Peter's Doctor barely registers that she's human is really interesting.

Does she bring her classroom persona with her now when she travels?

☛ Yeah, at times. I think it's much more even-keeled this year. They're a team, and she drives the TARDIS with him a lot this series. It's much more of a partnership. Clara in part thinks she's a bit of the Doctor, and she really isn't. She's obviously human, and is obviously gonna get herself in a lot of trouble if she starts to think like that.

Is there a logic to driving the TARDIS?

☛ Well, Peter has a logic, and I like to press lots of buttons. He just looks at me angrily, as in, like, "You're messing up the system!" I get really overexcited and just kind of press everything, and just look up to see him staring at me like that [laughs]. So I end up having to tone it down a bit.

Do you run into many people cosplaying as you?

☛ Yeah, I do, and I have to say I love it. I find it really flattering and really amazing that people go to so much detail and love it so much as well. I love looking out and seeing loads of Claras. A lot of people still dress up as Oswin Oswald, and the utility belt – loads of people actually put on the egg whisks and do the whole thing, and have the rose in the hair as well. So that's pretty cool.

Is there anything that makes you geek out? That presses your nerd buttons?

☛ We're at Comic-Con and Peter's like, "Yeah, I had all the old Doctors on my wall." And... I used to play with Sylvanian Families and My Little Pony and Black Beauty, reading the [Enid] Blyton books and stuff. I used to play in the garden a lot more than anything... I have to stop talking [laughs]. ●

Doctor Who returns to BBC One on 19 September.

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Random fact

→ Coleman's favorite Time Lords are David Tennant and Tom Baker – after Matt Smith and Peter Capaldi, of course...



“PETER
HAS A
LOGIC,
AND I LIKE
TO PRESS
LOTS OF
BUTTONS”



THE + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + + +
**MIGHTY TV
PREVIEW**

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Maybe Ash will get to
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SEASON 1

US BROADCAST Starz from 31 October

UK BROADCAST TBC

NEW SHOW! After more than 20 years, Bruce Campbell is back in the role that made him a cult icon: the chainsaw-slashing, wiseass hero of Sam Raimi's blood-soaked *Evil Dead* films. Does Ash still have what it takes to conquer Deadites and horror audiences alike? You bet.

Raimi explains how the show's ten first-season episodes grew out of his plans for a fourth movie in the series.

"My brother Ivan and I were writing a movie and it got really big, and we wanted to really spend more time with Ash than we were able to in the picture. Because as the *Evil Dead* movies developed he became more and more important. Finally, by the third, *Army Of Darkness*, all anybody wanted to see after that was Ash.

"[But] we had left Ash in such a pickle that we needed time to work it out," he adds, "and TV gave us that time, to bring out the different situations where we could really get him in trouble and get him out. It was a natural place to expand the storyline, and delve into the character, spend a lot of time with Bruce. God knows why anybody would want to do that, but it seemed like a lot of you wanted to do that... It's really an exploration of that monster-fighting hero that this Ash character is. It's a continuation of the *Evil Dead* story, and it has in it what would be in the movie. But greatly expanded." **Joseph McCabe**

GETTY ©



Dead, evil types not pictured.



Tom Bateman is our favourite two-faced chap this time around.

JEKYLL AND HYDE

Stevenson's split-personality scientist gets a superhero makeover

SEASON 1

UK BROADCAST ITV TBC

US BROADCAST TBC

NEW SHOW! Fifteen years on from reimagining *Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)* for the Beeb, Charlie Higson has finally returned to writing fantasy TV, to put a superhero spin on Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 novella. ITV's 10-part series (the first of many, it's hoped) will follow Jekyll's grandson Robert (Tom Bateman) as he comes to terms with his nature, battles monsters, and butts heads with MIO – a secret government organisation led by Richard E Grant's Sir Roger Bulstrode.

For Higson, it's an entirely natural approach. "Jekyll and Hyde was in many ways the start of that whole idea of the superhero alter ego," he explains. "That someone can turn into someone else and do all the things he wished he could do but can't do in his normal form. The Incredible Hulk is very much Jekyll and Hyde."

The show's been designed for the sort of timeslot that's usually home to the likes of *Doctor Who* and *Atlantis*. "We want a very broad audience," Higson says. "I want it to be watched by people who like X-Men films and stuff like that. You guys!"

Interestingly, Higson has chosen to set the series in the '30s, rather than the 19th century or the modern day. "It's an era that lends itself to a lot of great stories, because there was so much going on at the time; you can put in echoes of Indiana Jones and Tintin and Universal horror films." So as well as a fresh take on Hyde, expect a new spin on classic monsters like Frankenstein's creature, vampires and werewolves.

Ian Berriman

STAR WARS REBELS

The Sith hits the fan as the Emperor lets Vader off the leash

SEASON 2

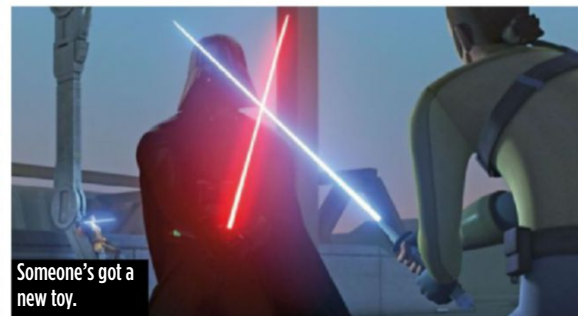
US BROADCAST Disney XD from 3 October

UK BROADCAST Disney XD TBC

RETURNING SHOW! The Ghost's

crew of proto-Rebels may have been on the run from the Empire for the whole of season one, but that's going to feel like a walk in the park compared to this year. One Mr Vader is now on their tail, and he's not in the mood to talk things out over a coffee. "In the classic films, once Darth Vader realises that his son is alive, there is a transformation in the back of his mind that says, 'perhaps there's a way I can gain control of the situation,'" explains executive producer Dave Filoni. "When he's first training for the Dark Side Anakin offers Padmé the opportunity to overthrow the Emperor and rule the galaxy together, which isn't something she wants. Vader kind of loses that motivation when she dies and he thinks he's lost everything. For a long time he's trapped in this period of torment and anger and self-hate. That's very much the Darth Vader we're bringing to screen."

With fugitive Jedi Kanan and co teaming up with Anakin's former apprentice Ahsoka Tano, we'll also start to see how their small Rebel team come to be part of a full-blown Alliance that'll go on to blow up Death Stars. "[When we started *Rebels*] we decided that we would work with a very small group," says Filoni. "[Co-creator] Simon Kinberg had a great idea to have a family structure, and show them get kind of drawn into this conflict, one stage at a time. It just gets bigger and bigger as they move forward, which builds the tension in a really nice way." **Richard Edwards**



Someone's got a new toy.



Could it be that *Supernatural* has been granted eternal life?

SUPERNATURAL

The Darkness is rising... Call the Winchesters!

SEASON 11

UK BROADCAST The CW from 7 October

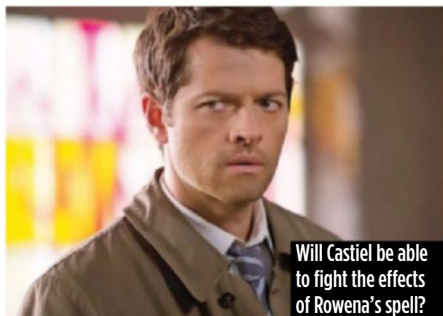
UK BROADCAST TBC

RETURNING SHOW! Uh, oh... Dean went and killed Death. That unexpected twist and the unleashing of an ancient evil known as the Darkness on Earth closed the 10th season finale of *Supernatural*, leaving an almighty mess for the Winchester brothers to clean up this year.

"In episode one, [Sam and Dean] are coming

off the catastrophe of last season," teases executive producer Andrew Dabb. "There's a moment where it's like, 'Okay, we're in this. This bad thing has happened. We have to save these people. We have to get out of here.' So right away, they are put together. But as the bigger questions get raised Sam and Dean are suddenly on the same page. Everybody wants the same thing, but their approach may be a little different. That's where I think you'll see bumps in the road."

A huge "bump" will be Amara (Emily Swallow), the Darkness character now roaming unchecked. "She's a really interesting character mainly because she's very alien to this world," Dabb explains. "She's been locked away since the dawn of creation. She has a very interesting point of view with how she approaches everything. There are ways – because the Darkness is such a big thing – to connect a lot of our different characters in terms of the impact on the witches, the impact on Hell and on Heaven, and on the guys. We're hoping she will have a big ripple effect for us." **Tara Bennett**



Will Castiel be able to fight the effects of Rowena's spell?

DANGER MOUSE

The greatest secret agent in the world is back

SEASON 1

UK BROADCAST CBBC from 28 September

US BROADCAST Netflix 2016

NEW SHOW! James Bond. Harry

Palmer. George Smiley. Danger Mouse? In terms of popularity and cultural cachet, DM certainly deserves to appear in the pantheon of great British secret agents. Having fronted his own cartoon from 1981-1992, espionage's most famous rodent is getting a 21st century makeover – but don't expect this new take to fiddle with the format too much.

"Obviously the concept that he's the world's greatest secret agent as a mouse, that has to be there," executive producer Bob Higgins tells *SFX*. "The relationship with Penfold has to be there, but we strengthened it, because in the original Penfold was almost like a doormat character, and here we really made him a true partner. It's that kind of *Lethal Weapon* partnership of two exact opposites put together and doing amazing things.

"They're also still based in the postbox, but we've teched it up, made it much more of a Batcave. And we wanted to keep the music – we've got the same iconic song but just hotter and much more contemporary."

With Alexander Armstrong, Kevin Eldon and Stephen Fry providing voices for DM, Penfold and spymaster Colonel K respectively, the reboot had no trouble attracting top comic talent. There'll also be guest star roles for Armstrong's *Pointless* friend Richard Osman and *Game Of Thrones* Lena Headey. "They watched it growing up," says Higgins. "That's really why we got most of the cast we got because everyone loved it and wanted to be part of it." **Richard Edwards**



Another new addition to *Danger Mouse*: the London Eye!



THE FLASH

DC's Scarlet Speedster is ready for his second lap

SEASON 2

US BROADCAST The CW from 6 October

UK BROADCAST Sky 1 TBC

RETURNING SHOW!

After its first season climaxed with Barry Allen and his friends ripping wide the multiverse, and the Flash racing into the stratosphere to prevent the planet from being destroyed, Warner Brothers' red-hot *Arrow* spin-off returns, bursting with newfound potential.

"The events of the finale are gonna reverberate throughout season two," executive producer Andrew Kreisberg assures us. "Obviously, the world isn't going to end. But how they solve it I think is going to be a surprise. And the effects of them having done what they did in the finale, there's obviously consequences to that. They messed up really

big, and they're not fully going to get away with it; and them dealing with the consequences of what they did makes up a lot of the emotional storylines for the early part of the season."

As Barry made his time trip, fans were treated to a rush of images from the Speedster's future, among them Caitlin Snow's Killer Frost and Central City's fabled Flash Museum. Kreisberg says the show will soon make good on at least some of this foreshadowing.

"There's a couple of things that you saw that will happen sooner rather than later, and then a couple of things that are just sort of wishes. You saw over the course of season one that we borrowed very heavily from [DC Comics story] *Rebirth*, and there are other iconic storylines that we're just as eager to tackle. What's great about the Flash is there's so much more story to tell." **Joseph McCabe**



The cast take a breather at San Diego Comic-Con.

GETTY (1)



Meagan Good plays
Lara Vega, Wilmer
Valderrama is Will Blake.

MINORITY REPORT

We have a premonition about this one

SEASON 1

US BROADCAST Fox from 21 September

UK BROADCAST TBC

NEW SHOW! You know TV has achieved a new level of respectability when Steven Spielberg deems the medium worthy to continue the mythology of one of his cinematic blockbusters. The TV series is a direct sequel to the film, set 10 years after the final frame, and

writer Max Borenstein came up with the twist of reframing the mythology through the eyes of the film's three Precogs, Agatha and twins Arthur and Dash.

"We ask 'What happened right after?'" reveals Borenstein. "These three Precogs are sent off when Precrime ends and are told they have to live in anonymity. No one can know who you are because [others] can use you and you'd be taken advantage of in horrible ways. And yet they are still haunted by the ability to see murders before they happen."

Borenstein says they'll explore how Agatha, now played by Laura Regan, is bitter about how she's been banished from society. "Dash, meanwhile, is haunted by the visions he gets. But Arthur is able to be more manipulative and live in the world in a much easier way." Together they'll be pulled back to their old skill sets on the sly by Detective Laura Vega (Meagan Good) who is determined to get justice for those still taking lives. Ambitious in scope and visuals, *Minority Report* may just have the SF pedigree to stand out from the pack. **Tara Bennett**

Good with Stark Sands, who takes on the role of Precog Dash.



ARROW

Oliver Queen masks up once more to face a Dark future

SEASON 4

US BROADCAST The CW from 7 October

UK BROADCAST Sky 1 TBC

RETURNING SHOW! Having defeated

his arch-foe Ra's al Ghul and taken a well-earned break from crimefighting with his lady love Felicity Smoak, Starling City's champion has never been more content. But as *Arrow* has shown, such contentment often proves short-lived for Oliver Queen.

"Oliver's in a happy place at the end of season three," co-executive producer Wendy Mericle tells *SFX*, "and we're going to start him in the same place in season four. We're going to allow Oliver and the team to explore what it's like to see Oliver in a really different place. When he came back from the island in season one he was basically a soldier coming back from war. Now he's with Felicity and he's happy. If you see a brightening of tone or a little more humour in the show, it's really more of a reflection of where he is emotionally than anything else."

Waiting in the wings, however, is the fourth season's principal antagonist, Damian Dark, played by *Captain America: The First Avenger*'s Neal McDonough.

"Damian Dark is a completely new kind of villain we've never seen on the show before," says Mericle. "We're going to be exploring elements and powers that are not meta and are new to the show. He's menacing and terrifying, and we're bringing him in from the beginning. We're hoping that the premiere feels like a finale, and we're starting with our Big Bad coming out of the gates, super scary and super quick."

Joseph McCabe



Arrow's going green. Maybe it was all that rich chocolate cake he ate.

GETTY (3)

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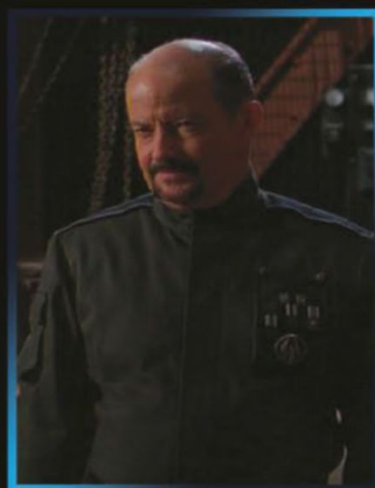
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JENNIFER KELLER



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The cast step into the light at Comic-Con.



MARVEL'S AGENTS OF SHIELD

Coulson and the gang find out what it means to be Inhuman

SEASON 3

US BROADCAST ABC from 29 September

UK BROADCAST Channel 4 TBC

RETURNING SHOW! Having made

their debut halfway through *Agents Of SHIELD*'s second season, the Inhumans will continue to have a major presence in the show's third outing. "I think the key for this year really rests on the word 'Inhuman';" executive producer Jeph Loeb tells *SFX*. "It enables us to be able to explore characters in a very different kind of way. For someone like Phil Coulson who has lost a hand, has alien DNA inside of him and came back from the dead, he's starting to question his own humanity. Then you get someone like Ward who is willing to do anything in order to get, as he refers to it, closure, so there's a kind of inhuman quality to that. And then there's the Marvel version of what Inhuman is, and the notion that now the Terrigen is out in the ecosystem, you could suddenly wake up tomorrow and be completely different is extremely exciting and gives us a very clear mission statement for SHIELD."

So is this the start of a long build up to Marvel's 2019 *Inhumans* movie? "If more people learn what an Inhuman is through the show, that's more people who know what an Inhuman is," says Loeb. "So when the movie comes out – whether or not the movie has a completely different plot or characters – the concept of that is something that will already have been introduced in a way that's very, very exciting." **Richard Edwards**

GETTY (3)

GOTHAM

Time to clear some space at Arkham...

SEASON 2

US BROADCAST Fox from 21 September

UK BROADCAST Channel 5 TBC

RETURNING SHOW! For those who

found themselves rooting for the bad guys running the underbelly of Gotham last year, you're in luck when it comes to the theme of the Bat-prequel's second season.

"There is a genuine subtitle on the show [this year], which is, 'The Rise Of The Villains,'" reveals executive producer Bruno Heller. "It's very much about the transition from old-school, Mafia-type villainy to the kind of grandiose, grotesque, gothic evil that *Gotham* is slowly moving towards. So, the crimes are more grand, the villains are more grand-scale and

theatrical; the monsters start to come out."

Despite the retirement of crime lord Carmine Falcone (John Doman) and the apparent death of deliciously wicked Fish Mooney (Jada Pinkett Smith), there will be plenty of successors appearing to make James Gordon's (Ben McKenzie) goal of cleaning up the Gotham streets even more Herculean.

"We've thought long and hard about this," director/executive producer Danny Cannon says of their selection. "So many of the characters don't have origin stories, so it's not just a question of enjoying going back to an origin story. It's 'Who fits in a realistic world?' They have to have their feet on the ground. Some characters are more advanced stylistically. We found the Mr Freeze story very emotional and that's one we are going to look at. Hugo Strange is a very interesting character who has never had an origin story, as is the Calendar Man. Azrael is a character we are starting very, very, very way back. And Tigress also." **Tara Bennett**

Go on Jerome, start cracking a joke or three.



Oswald Cobblepot isn't changing that hairstyle just yet.



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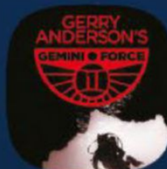
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Farscape / Mad Max 2



Brian Wheeler
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Jamie Anderson
Gemini Force 1



M.G. Harris
Gemini Force 1



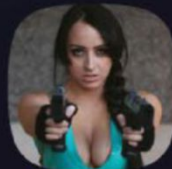
Richard James
Space Precinct



Josephine Gillan
Game of Thrones



Pixie Le Knot
Game of Thrones



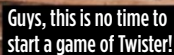
Tabitha Lyons
Prop Maker / Cosplayer



Lee Sullivan
Comic Book Artist



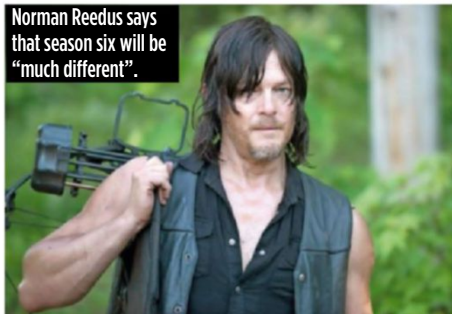
Lucy Saxon
Author / Cosplayer



Team Rick or Team Morgan? Which will the survivors choose?

▶ **UK BROADCAST** Fox from 12 October

Norman Reedus says that season six will be “much different”.



Andrew Lincoln will be keeping that American accent for a while yet.



SECRET

Let's hope Brian Sinclair doesn't take naughty steroids, eh?



Future meeting with
Batgirl on a rainy day
lined up yet?

SUPERGIRL

Will the Maid of Might soar in her first solo TV show?

SEASON 1

US BROADCAST CBS from 26 October

UK BROADCAST TBC

NEW SHOW! DC Comics' *Girl of Steel*

has explored all manner of media since she first appeared in *Action Comics* 252 in 1959. Yet this year marks the first time she's starred in her own TV series. Credit the folks behind the successful *Arrow* and *The Flash* with introducing Supergirl to a new worldwide audience, and with seeing that Melissa Benoist's Kara Zor-El gets a fitting rogues' gallery when her rocket ride from Krypton accidentally shakes loose an entire intergalactic prison on Earth; many of whom, says executive producer Andrew Kreisberg, will be controlled by the first season's Big Bad – Kara's own aunt.

"The more personal those conflicts are, the

better they are," says Kreisberg. "Just like on *The Flash*, Harrison Wells was, in a way, like a father to Barry. So the fact that he was also the villain just made it that much more exciting."

Kreisberg is quick to point out the chief difference between Supergirl and her famous high-flying cousin.

"Superman doesn't remember Krypton. He was born there, but he came here as a baby. As far as he's concerned, aside from the fact that he's an alien, he really is from Kansas. Kara remembers growing up on [Krypton]. She remembers her aunt, she remembers her parents, she remembers her family. So for her it's not like Kal-El meeting Zod, where 'We're from the same world, but it doesn't really mean anything.' For Kara, these are people that she knew growing up. That's going to lead to some incredible drama." **Joseph McCabe**

NOT ONLY BUT ALSO +

2015 has even more
wholesome genre
goodness to offer...



→ David S Goyer's Renaissance fantasy **Da Vinci's Demons** returns for its third and final season, as does Eli Roth's horror thriller **Hemlock Grove**... The second half of the fifth season of Syfy's **Haven** is due out this year... **The Vampire Diaries** is back – minus Elena... **Continuum**'s fourth and final season consists of six episodes... New showrunner Clifton Campbell takes over **Sleepy Hollow** for its third season... French back-from-the-dead drama **The Returned** is back for a second series... **American Horror Story** loses Jessica Lange but gains Lady Gaga for its 13-episode fifth season... The secret is out in **iZombie** season two... Riley Voelkel becomes a regular on the third season of **The Originals**... Josh Holloway stars in the ten-episode first season of Carlton Cuse's invasion drama **Colony**... David Greenwalt's **Grimm** is back for a fifth season of fairytale-inspired procedurals... The American-British doomsday comet comedy **You, Me And The Apocalypse** hits TV... Time-travel romance **Outlander** heads to France in its second season... **Lost Girl**'s fifth season of 16 episodes is its last... Thomas Jane stars in **The Expanse**, Syfy's adaptation of the acclaimed mystery/space opera novels; while the network adapts Arthur C Clarke's classic **Childhood's End** in a six-episode miniseries... **The Librarians** has earned a second ten-episode season...

THE
**MIGHTY TV
PREVIEW**



WITH GREAT POWERS

WE **DO** NEED
ANOTHER **HEROES!**
BRYAN CAIRNS
IS PRESENT AS
THE NOUGHTIES
SERIES IS REBORN

Television has entered a golden age of superheroes. From *Arrow* to *Flash*, *Agents Of SHIELD* to *Gotham*, the small screen increasingly resembles a spinner rack of comic books. And with even more superpowered shows set to arrive this autumn as *Supergirl* and *DC's Legends Of Tomorrow* make their bow, there's no better time for NBC to revive their dormant *Heroes* franchise with the 13-episode event series *Heroes Reborn*.

"Clearly, the genre audience has become the mainstream audience," executive producer Tim Kring tells *SFX* over the phone. "When *Heroes* first came out, we were still testing those waters as to whether genre could cross over and become mainstream. We were one of the first ones to prove there was a mainstream version of a genre show. *Heroes* had always been very much about the characters and less

about the idea of special effects and powers. It was about what these people were dealing with as opposed to what to do with these powers. I do agree the world has changed and people are very familiar with the superhero genre now. In some ways, I feel *Heroes* was partially responsible for bringing that about."

Back in 2006, *Heroes* certainly established a benchmark. The show's complex characters, epic vibe, as well as catchy tagline – "Save the cheerleader, save the world" – made it a breakout hit. However, the writers could not sustain the momentum after season one. *Heroes'* dense mythology and unresolved plotlines caused viewers to lose interest. Ratings fizzled by season two and plummeted in season three. Eventually, the series was cancelled after its fourth season. Nobody ever expected *Heroes* to be resurrected until NBC came knocking on Kring's door again.

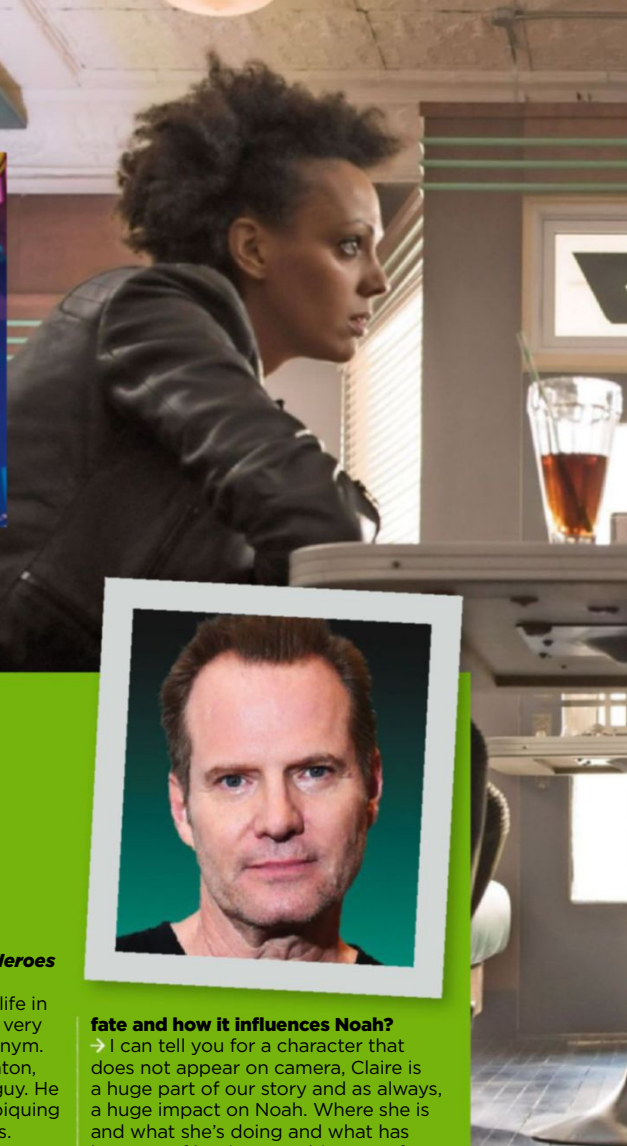
"There was a new regime at NBC," explains Kring about the genesis of *Heroes Reborn*. "Things have changed so quickly in the way people are watching television and →



Stop, thief!



Kiki Sukezane has a connection to Hiro's sword.



consuming shows. *Heroes* was at the forefront of when people started to consume content in very different ways. When the show was cancelled, we were ironically the number one most-downloaded show in the world. People were clearly watching the show in very different ways. Now, with the ability to count those as viewers, NBC realised there was a very big audience out there for this brand.

"Even though we finished in a place that allowed the audience to have an ending to the series with Claire's character coming out to the world with these powers, the truth is we had more stories that we were planning," continues Kring. "I had been talking to people about that at NBC and we finally decided this was the time to relaunch it."

Heroes Reborn maintains the core concept of "ordinary individuals with extraordinary powers". The pilot picks up five years after Claire's demonstration that superpowered humans truly exist. A recent terrorist attack in Odessa, Texas, is blamed on "Evos", or evolved humans, which only escalates the fear and hate towards them. As a result, those people have gone into hiding. Meanwhile, two vigilantes, Luke Collins (Zachary Levi) and his wife Joanne (Judith Shekoni), have embarked on a crusade to eradicate the Evos after someone close to them perished in the Odessa tragedy.

MAN ON A MISSION

"When we introduce Luke, he's a pretty scary guy," says Kring. "He has a personal vendetta that he's trying to square. He's a very confused and dark figure when we first meet him. We watch his journey of growth and change and possible redemption. Luke will continue to challenge the audience to which side he's on in much the same way HRG did in the first season of *Heroes*. As for Zach, when we spoke about him being on the show, we crafted a character that would challenge his fanbase that know him in a certain way."

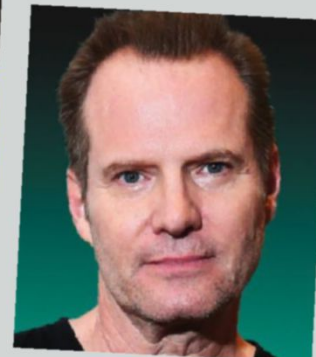
The couple's potential targets include awkward teen Tommy (Robbie Kay), former solider Carlos (Ryan Guzman) and Tokyo resident Miko (Kiki Sukezane), who also has a mysterious connection to Hiro Nakamura's sword.



The nation's favourite pair of spectacles returns.

"CLAIRE IS A HUGE PART OF OUR STORY..."

JACK COLEMAN
HRG is back!



Where do we find Noah when *Heroes Reborn* begins?

➤ We find Noah leading a quiet life in a residential area and keeping a very low profile with another pseudonym. Then there's this character, Quinton, who is this twitchy, conspiracy guy. He starts hunting down Noah and piquing his curiosity about certain things.

How much of the Company man is still left in Noah?

➤ He has all these instincts or particular skill sets. He has a genuine desire to settle down and lead a quiet, domestic life. A leopard can't change its spots, but when Noah goes off the grid, part of it is to recharge the batteries. There's no question that once he's in, he's all in.

How much will the show address Claire's

fate and how it influences Noah?

➔ I can tell you for a character that does not appear on camera, Claire is a huge part of our story and as always, a huge impact on Noah. Where she is and what she's doing and what has become of her is a very big part of our story and a very big part of what drives Noah forward.

Noah has experienced a memory loss. What is his mission this season?

➔ This memory loss is all connected to what has gone on. It's a much bigger part of our story and the ultimate fate of the world. Noah is trying to figure out what it is he doesn't remember and why he doesn't remember and what it all relates to. It's one little thread that unravels another.

Despite focusing on an original group of characters, some past fan favourites will pop in. There's Matt Parkman (Greg Grunberg), Hiro (Masi Oka), Mohinder Suresh (Sendhil Ramamurthy), the Haitian (Jimmy Jean-Louis) and Angela Petrelli (Cristine Rose), to name a few. Another familiar face that plays a pivotal role in *Heroes Reborn* is Claire's father Noah Bennet, aka HRG (Jack Coleman). The former Company man's attempt to lead a normal life hits a major snag when he gets swallowed up by a growing conspiracy.

"We've come out with HRG in a world where he was proven right about his fear of what would happen to these people," says Kring. "There was an event that happened a year prior to our story happening, a kind of 9/11-type of event that changed everything in the world and made it possible for people with

Zachary Levi and Judith Shekoni are out for blood.

“When *Heroes* was cancelled, we were the most downloaded show in the world”

“I WANTED TO PLAY SOMETHING DARKER!”

ZACHARY LEVI
The *Chuck* star turns villainous

After five seasons on *Chuck*, what made this the right show to lock yourself into as a regular again?

→ I wanted to play something that was not Chuck. I loved playing Chuck, but I didn't want to be pigeon-holed into that character. I wanted to play something darker, moodier, grittier and dirtier. That's what we found with Luke.

Luke and his wife are hunting down humans with superpowers. Do you consider him a villain?

→ I definitely think he's doing villainous things. He's aware of that. Real villains don't think they are doing villainous things. Real villains are perfectly happy with the decisions they are making.



Luke may think that to an extent, but he's tortured. It's not as black and white for him. I think there's a lot of ambiguity going on.

How much have you enjoyed tapping into your dark side?

→ I like it, but it's also been very hard. Up until now, I've mainly done comedic or lighter drama. Occasionally on *Chuck*, we went there. Just in five episodes on *Heroes Reborn*, there have been so many intense scenes already. I'm like, "Geez, man. I need to go do some comedy. I need some levity back in here." It's super-draining. If you are giving your all to stuff that is really dramatic or dark, it's difficult not to let it affect you.

powers to be persecuted. This 9/11 event was blamed on them. How HRG remembers it is not exactly how it went down. His story is really a journey to find out what happened on that day. By doing that, he uncovers a very big scheme. We talk about his story in the way of the classic paranoid thrillers of the '70s like *Three Days Of The Condor*. He's a man on a mission in a world that wants to stop him."

MOVING ALONG

Viewers won't have to wait the full season before HRG, Tommy, Carlos, Mike and other characters assemble. With only 13 episodes, Kring promises a brisk pace.

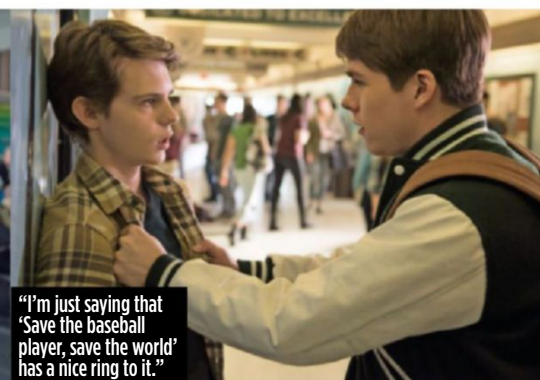
"There's still this idea that the characters aren't connected at the beginning, but I think the audience can expect to see them start to collide in a faster way this time around.

"We lay out very quickly that there's something that needs to be stopped," Kring continues. "There's a mystery to what it is and how it needs to be stopped and who needs to be involved. We are going to put this puzzle together every episode and figure out a way to bring these characters together so they will have a chance to save the world."

No doubt that endeavour will require a lot of teamwork and powers, but Kring is reluctant to reveal which special ability each newcomer



"You looking at me?"



"I'm just saying that 'Save the baseball player, save the world' has a nice ring to it."

possesses. Instead, he acknowledges how challenging it was to create innovative powers that were fresh and dynamic for viewers.

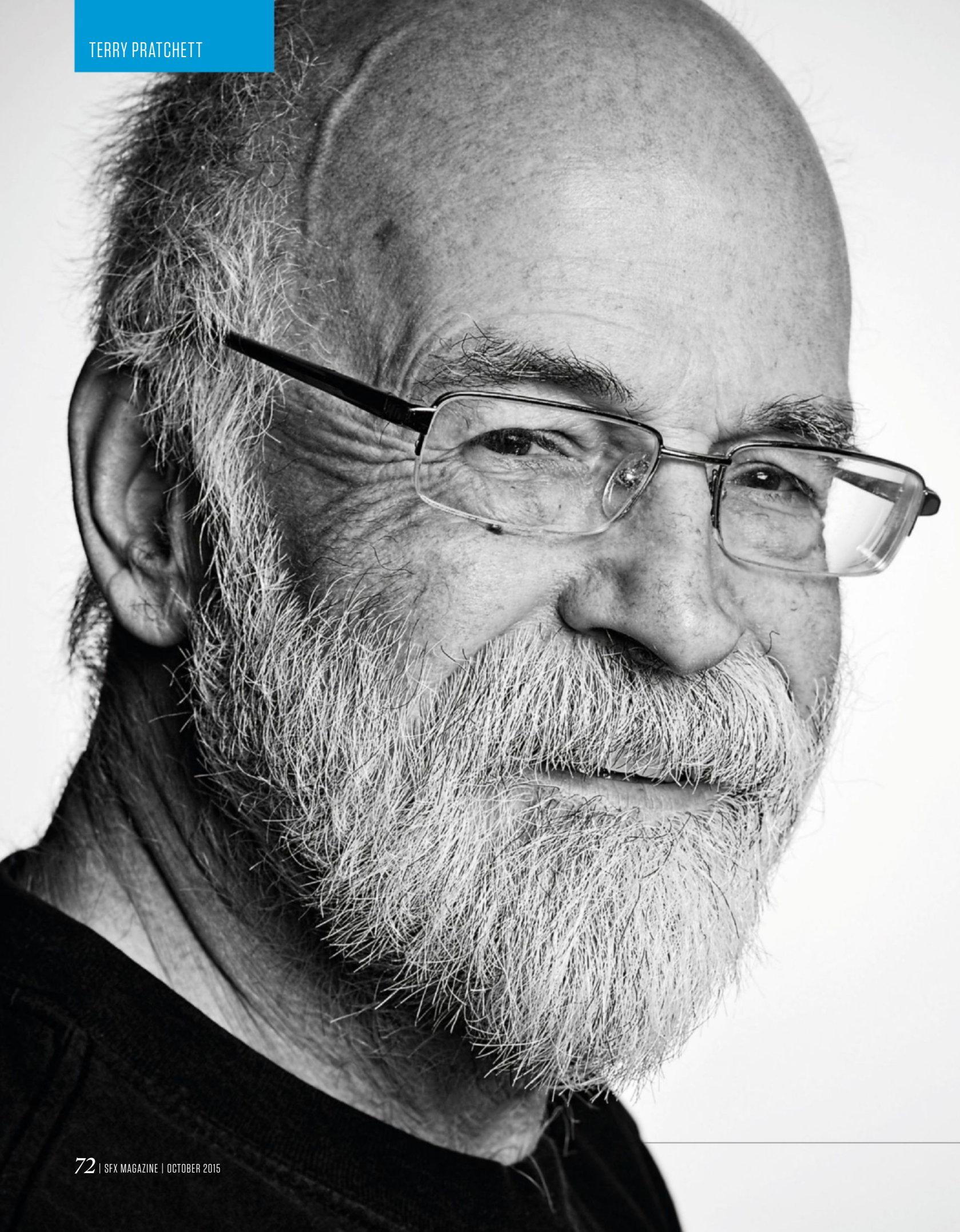
"We struggled with that for four seasons of the show. We decided a lot of the powers you are going to see are somewhat familiar, but with a new and interesting twist. Five years later we can now produce things that we couldn't do back then. We have cheaper, faster, more efficient and sophisticated special effects. I think the audience will see there's a bigger box of crayons to play with than there was back in the original series.

"But, once again, I think the power of the show has always been about the dilemma and the trauma of the characters," he adds. "The powers were always in service of that story. However, you're going to see some new things we weren't able to do five years ago, even stuff I don't think we've seen on television before."

Kring is hoping to lure old and new viewers back with an ambitious season-spanning arc. Ratings will determine whether NBC orders more *Heroes Reborn*. However, from the sound of it, Kring believes they have only scratched the surface of this universe.

"We have been asked to do this 13-episode event, which we are approaching as 'this is the story we want to tell,'" concludes Kring. "At the end of it, we will have told that story and you'll have a completion to it. With that said, the world of *Heroes* is big enough to have an undetermined number of people around the globe who are waking up to these powers. You can keep retelling these stories and the world continually needs to be saved from something. There's always a way to find a new story to tell." ●

Heroes Reborn begins on NBC in the US in September.



Talking Pterry

In tribute to the late **Sir Terry Pratchett**, Jonathan Wright listens in as fellow writers choose their favourite Pterry books

This month sees the publication of Sir Terry Pratchett's final *Discworld* novel, *The Shepherd's Crown*. Because of a fault in reality, we're sadly unable to talk with Pratchett himself about the book. Instead, inspired by Neil Gaiman's moving tributes to his friend, we've sought out the perspectives of Pratchett's fellow writers on his work. Thanks to all who contributed – and to AS Byatt, who let it be known that her favourite Pratch novel was *Small Gods* but with whom we were unable to schedule an interview before our deadline. If you should ever have a moment to explain why it's your pick, Dame Antonia...

Lavie Tidhar

The Dark Side Of The Sun (1976)



“You could say it's his early science fiction book, but there's something really charming about it, a lot of love for the material it's playing with. It's almost like early Pratchett wasn't quite sure if he was going to be the fantasist or the science fiction writer. There are references to everything from Asimov onwards in there and it's full of affection, which is what I really like.”

Suzanne McLeod

The Colour Of Magic (1983)



“It was the first Pratchett I read and it's just got everything in it, hasn't it? It's very like *The Princess Bride*, in that he's taking the mickey, taking fantasy tropes and making fun of them, but also you can see he loves them.”

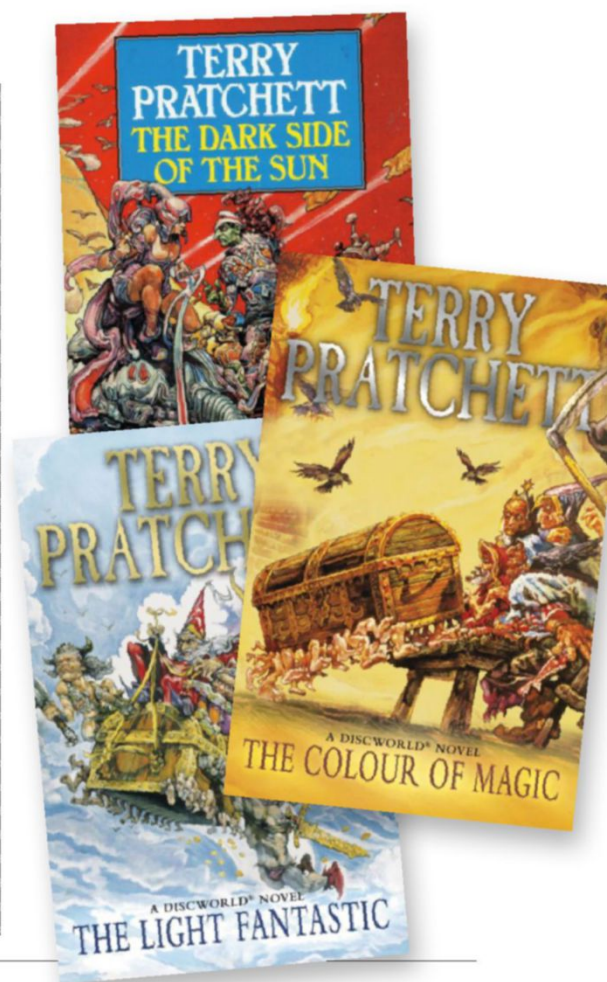
Stephen Baxter

The Light Fantastic (1986)



“This was Terry's take on the SF disaster story. Its structure mirrors that of a movie like *When Worlds Collide*. Experts, in this case Druid stone-circle computer engineers, see the approach of a rogue star. As disaster looms, people turn on each other and Terry's most morally absolute character, Death, looks on in dismay. ‘THE DEATH OF THE WARRIOR OR THE OLD MAN OR THE LITTLE CHILD, THIS I UNDERSTAND... I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS DEATH-OF-THE-MIND.’

“So in this early, slapstick-comedy novel you have quite a profound moral message. Maybe disaster porn is part of our maturing as a →



species, as we attempt to deal calmly with long-term risks such as asteroid strikes. And *The Light Fantastic* represents sanity: we can take the mickey out of ourselves, even over the end of the world."

Claire North

Guards! Guards! (1989)



“The City Watch books chart the rise of Captain Sam Vimes, one-time drunken captain of the motley Night Watch of Ankh-Morpork, through to becoming the Duke of Ankh, the Discworld's

most cantankerous diplomat. But whether sailing to war or lost in the mines of Überwald, chased by werewolves or arresting gods, Vimes remains a copper through and through: cynical, savvy, an idealist who expects the worst – and he'll always get his man. Or vampire. Or king-dragon...

“If, like me, you grew up on tales of the Watch, take a moment to remember that *Guards! Guards!* is where it all began, back in Treacle Mine Road – with Vimes drunk and lying in the gutter, staring at the stars.”

Jon Courtenay Grimwood

Good Omens (with Neil Gaiman, 1990)



“It was the first Pratchett book I read, and I had that feeling you have when you come across something new. It's sort of *William And The Anti-Christ*. You've got this little gang roaming around the

countryside being very English and very childish, and one of them is actually the Anti-Christ but doesn't know it.

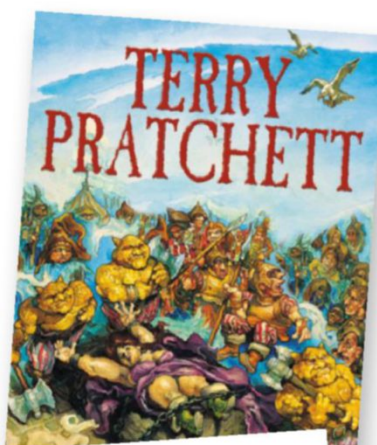
“Also, I drove a motorbike and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are bikers. They're fantastic. Pestilence has given up because of penicillin and been replaced by Pollution. Where he goes, rivers curdle, and streets fill with crisp wrappers and rusting cans.”

Justina Robson

Small Gods (1992)



“It touches on all the most deep and profound questions about religion and religious belief, but also personal belief. Why believe in anything? What are you going to believe? Should you believe in

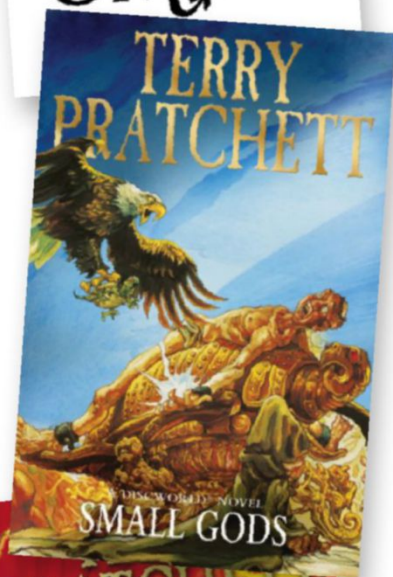


Terry Pratchett & Neil Gaiman

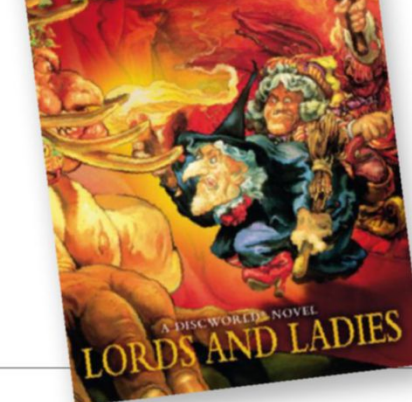
AS HEARD ON RADIO 4



GOOD OMENS



PRATCHETT



scientific things? It goes into all of it. Pratchett is always a very comprehensive writer, he seems to get loads of angles on the same subject.”

Adam Roberts

Lords And Ladies (1992)



“*Lords And Ladies* manages what I think of as the ‘Pratchett Trifecta’: it is brilliantly readable; it is hilarious; it is profound. In this case, it is profound about the way class and status works in society,

and the malign effect of judging people by looks rather than worth. At his peak, Pratchett was unbeatable.

“Some of the later books aren't quite so whole, I think, but I don't want to suggest they're weak. They're not. I've always loved the bit in *Carpe Jugulum* where Granny Weatherwax defines sin (‘Sin, young man, is when you treat people as things. Including yourself. That's what sin is’) not least because it manages to boil down to one line the whole of Kant's ethical system – Kant says, in a nutshell, that people must always be treated as ends in themselves and never as means to an end. I once told Terry how clever it was that he'd summarised Kant's ethical philosophy so trenchantly. He looked at me and said: ‘Well, I can't say I've read a great deal of Kant...’”

Aliette de Bodard

Hogfather (1997)



“My native language is French. A lot of the reason I write in English is because I started reading Terry Pratchett in French and thought he was funny, but had to be funnier in English, so I started reading in

English and it was... harder than I expected! *Hogfather* was the first book I read after I came to London, so I've a special fondness for it.”

Val McDermid

Night Watch (2002)



“The book I go back to more than the others is *Night Watch* [in which Vimes travels into his own past]. Although it's a very funny book, it's also a very serious book.

It's a book that really asks us questions about ourselves: who we are, how we got to be who we are, why we believe what we believe, why the things we hold dear are so important to us. It's Pratchett doing all the

things he does best: he's making us smile and he's making us think, he's also pricking pomposity wherever he finds it along the way.

"As a crime writer, he knows how to make a plot work. He's very good at that thing Agatha Christie was very good at, the subplots that work – every single subplot has set-up, development, pay-off."

Val McDermid's *Splinter The Silence* (Little, Brown) is out on 27 August.

Jenny Colgan

The Wee Free Men (2003)



"Terry saw me through a lot of loneliness and strangeness when I first moved to London and I clung on to him like a crutch, taking *Discworld* books out one after another from the library.

"My favourite then was probably *Wyrd Sisters*, but I subsequently loved *The Wee Free Men*, because it is funny and perfectly pitched for children, because it's got a lot of Scottish, and because it has the single best piece of advice I've ever read in a novel: Miss Tick saying to Tiffany that 'if you trust in yourself... and believe in your dreams... and follow your star... you'll still get beaten by people who spent their time working hard and learning things'."

Charlie Fletcher

A Hat Full Of Sky (2004)

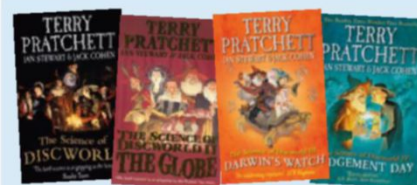
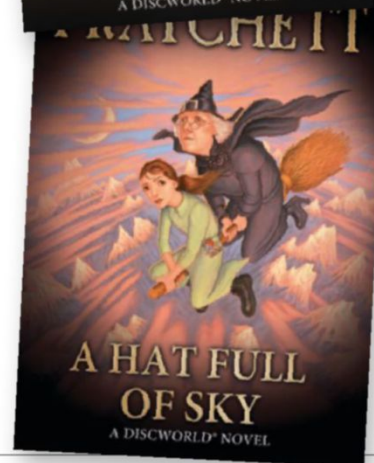
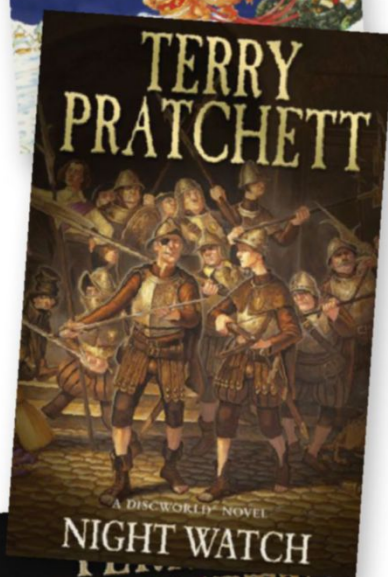
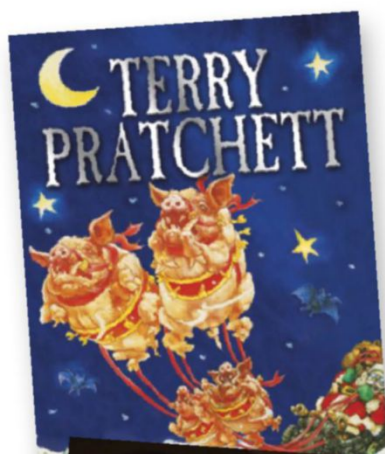


"I stepped sideways out of screenwriting because I wanted to write something for my kids. *The Amazing Maurice* had come out and I thought the best way to learn about something was to ask an

expert. I had a column in *The Scotsman* and I asked them if I could interview Terry. His mind just fizzed. He was an inspiration. A year later I had written my first YA book, *Stoneheart*.

"*A Hat Full Of Sky* is my favourite Tiffany Aching book. As someone with a feisty daughter, I was interested in the way the Tiffany books are really about a girl coping with, 'What am I going to mature into?' and all those choices around identity. I was looking at the world my daughter was growing up into that was selling her so many visions about what a girl should be, so few of which were concentrating on what the *inside* of a girl should be, in terms of her mind and her brain and her strength."

The Shepherd's Crown, Terry Pratchett's final novel, is released on 27 August and will be reviewed in the next issue of SFX.



THE SCIENTISTS' PERSPECTIVE

Prof Ian Stewart

Mathematician and co-author of *The Science Of Discworld* books
Equal Rites (1987)

"It's one of the early books by Terry where he's getting seriously into social commentary. It's about female equality on the Disc and the way he explores this is a lovely example of narrative imperative, the power of story, or in this case the power of magic, the way things happen because the magic wants them to. He has this nice set-up where the eighth son of an eighth son always has to go off to be a wizard and train at Unseen University. After a magical staff has been presented to the child, which turns him into a wizard, the midwife points out that actually it's a girl. By the very straightforward logic of *Discworld*, clearly the girl has to become a wizard."

Dr Jack Cohen

Biologist and co-author of *The Science Of Discworld* books
Small Gods (1992)

"On *Discworld*, gods have potency depending on how many worshippers they have. At the start of this story, the Great God Om has but one, Brutha the novice, and is a one-eyed tortoise, almost totally ineffective. After interactions with the evil priest Vorbis, Brutha is being killed by Vorbis when Vorbis is killed by a – the – tortoise being dropped by an eagle. Everyone suddenly believes, Om becomes truly Great – and is told by Brutha that He must obey his own rules! The end of the story, Death arranging for dead Brutha to lead dead Vorbis to Judgment, always leaves me in tears."

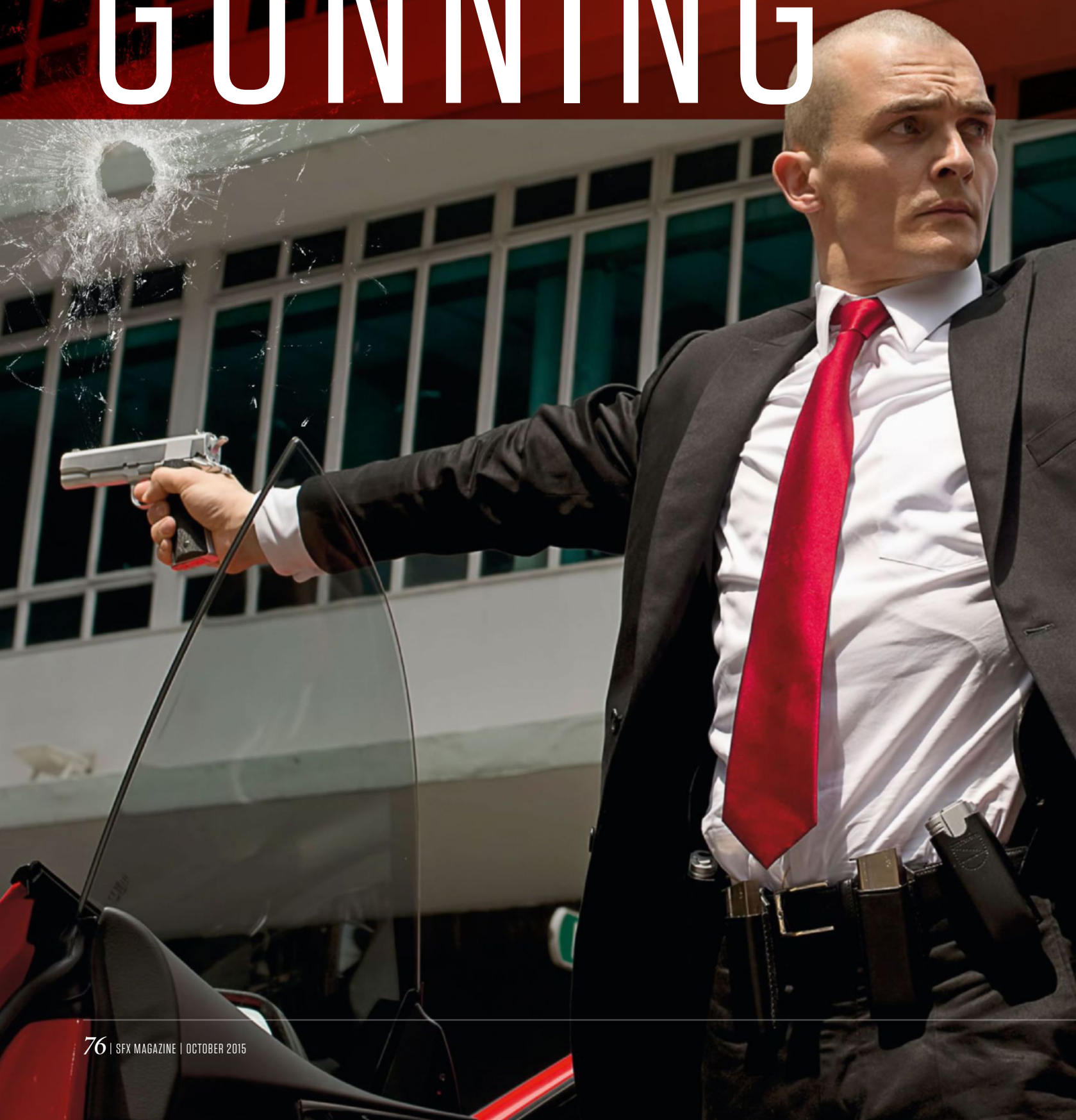
Dr Marek Kukula

Public astronomer at Royal Observatory Greenwich and co-author, with Simon Guerrier, of *The Scientific Secrets Of Doctor Who*
The Colour Of Magic (1983)

"It's not the most characteristic of the series because they evolved as he got into his stride, but I remember reading it back in the 1980s in my mid-teens and just being blown away by it. Pratchett helped to open up connections between the world of popular culture, science fiction and fantasy, and science. *Discworld* is amazing, but through *Discworld* we also see the world in which we live is amazing."

HITMAN: AGENT 47

GUNNING FOR



GLORY

The genetically-modified videogame assassin gets another shot at the big screen with a full-on reboot. Matt Maytum takes aim...

Bald head. Black suit. Red tie. Chances are you'll recognise the iconic protagonist from IO Studios' videogame series even if you've never picked up a joypad in your life. Established in 2000, the ongoing stealth franchise releases its sixth instalment later this year, simply titled *Hitman*. A genetically modified clone, Agent 47 was "born" and raised in a Romanian asylum, and taught the tricks of the trade towards becoming a stone-cold killer. So far, so cinematic.

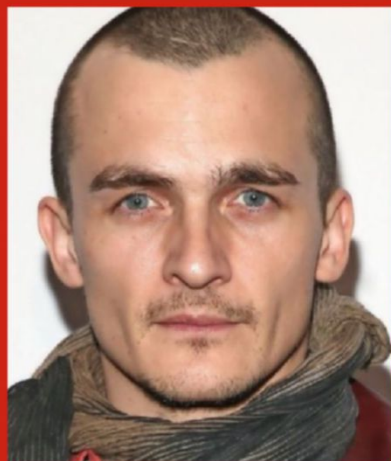
"[Agent 47 is] a very cinematic character," says producer Adrian Askarieh when *SFX* meets him in a quiet room tucked away in one of the film's key Berlin sets, a jet-engine factory where henchmen are being taken down with ruthless precision. "When I played the games I always thought there was something very 'wish-fulfilment' about the character – even though he was an assassin you kinda wanted to be him."

Askarieh has a long movie history with the character, having snapped up the rights when he was putting the 2007 adaptation, *Hitman*, together. That film starred Timothy Olyphant in the title role, with a pre-Bond Olga Kurylenko and Dougray Scott also along for the ride. Receiving a critical drubbing on release – mouldering on just 14 per cent on Rotten Tomatoes – a planned sequel was canned, even though the film was actually a modest hit. "The first film was a success," says Askarieh. "It cost \$26m and made \$100m worldwide. It sold a lot of DVDs."

However, despite turning a profit, Askarieh is quick to admit that the film didn't quite hit the highs they were hoping for. "We didn't think it was the movie we all wanted, to be honest with you," he says. "We didn't feel like the character deserved to have that as its kind of cinematic foray, so we convinced the →



Run. Shoot.
Run. Shoot. You
get the idea.



"HE'S NOT A MACHINE..."

RUPERT FRIEND
Agent 47

Were you familiar with the Hitman videogame character?

→ I played the game to prepare for this. I was just struck by the intelligence of the gameplay: "Don't pull your gun out. Do it without that. Use stealth. Use cunning. Use disguise."

How have you found doing the action and stunts?

→ I love it. I said from the beginning, I want to do everything. It's me unless it's super dangerous. My first stunt double broke his shoulder being thrown into a wall. So that one I didn't do [laughs].

47 is a bit of a mystery. Does that add to the challenge of creating the character?

→ Yeah. I was super fascinated by the idea that potentially he's a little bit of a corrupt clone - the 47th incarnation of this über human had a couple of flaws. He's not a machine, which is very important to me. It's not the Terminator. He's a genetically modified human being.

If you could see 47 team up with another videogame character, who would it be?

→ You'll see how long it's been since I've played videogames when I say something like Ryu from *Street Fighter*. But people would talk about who would win: 47 versus Bourne, or 47 versus Bond? The answer is 47, of course [smiles].

studio to let us reboot it." Hoping that *Hitman: Agent 47* will be the first in a series of three or four movies, he's confident that a string of hit films will give videogame adaptations the sheen of respectability they've so far been lacking. "You're going to see exactly what happened with comics in 2000 with *X-Men*, and I'm hoping this will be one of the ones that ushers that in," he says, name-checking the likes of *Assassin's Creed*, *Warcraft* and *Splinter Cell* as other films that could help turn the tide.

FEATURE FILM DEBUT

Director Aleksander Bach, a first-time feature filmmaker who made a name for himself with an award-winning Red Cross commercial, is similarly candid when it comes to the cinematic legacy of videogame movies. Asked if he had any hesitation adapting a game that had already been tackled once, he explains, "Yeah, of course, because, I have to tell you, a lot of people are sharing the same opinion that there are not a lot of good movies based on games. There's a lot of crap there, that's for sure." Bach is similarly forthright when it comes to discussing the 2007 film, admitting that he watched it in preparation. "I don't have a problem saying that I knew it could be better. I wanted to have fewer characters in our movie. I wanted to concentrate on Agent 47."

With more of an emphasis on character, suddenly Rupert Friend doesn't seem like such a surprise choice for the title character. The 33-year-old Brit, best known for period pieces (*Pride & Prejudice*, *The Young Victoria*) and TV's *Homeland*, is doing a lot of his own stunts and ambidextrous gunplay, despite the fact he

Rupert Friend replaced Paul Walker in the lead role.



had to step in at short notice after the tragic death of Paul Walker, who was originally in line to star. "I think it would've been such a different movie," says producer Charles Gordon, whose credits include *Die Hard* and *Waterworld*. Having brought up Friend's name at the earliest casting meetings, Gordon is convinced that Friend is the natural successor to the role: "When I look at Rupert [on set], I swear to god some days I think I'm playing the videogame. I mean, he is the perfect 47. And he's so smart, his instincts are incredible."

In line with the more grounded and gritty tone that the reboot is aiming for, Friend's iteration of the character has short stubble on his bonce (as opposed to being completely clean-shaven) and the signature barcode tattoo on his neck has been toned down for a more subtle design. In contrast to the game's hulking musclemans, the intention is to have an

© GETTY (2)



Shooting the shooting action on the streets.



We need '60s Batman-style sound bubbles!

“We had to respect his origins, the mythology, the look”

antagonist who could believably exist in the real world (albeit with genetically-enhanced super skills). “It’s a very interesting character because he’s very smart,” says Bach. “He’s a clone; he’s prepared for everything. But what he’s not prepared for is to show emotion, because he’s a clone. That’s an interesting part for me as a director: what is happening behind the eyes of a cold character?”

Quite what’s going on behind those eyes is something you’ll probably have to wait until the film opens to find out. Everyone is tight-lipped when it comes to plot specifics. Providing something of a tease, Askarieh explains, “It’s Agent 47 after a target that brings him face-to-face with his own creation and to his own past. That’s all I can say about the story, honestly. It’s doing an origin story without doing an origin story, a very interesting way for the audience who doesn’t know who

Hitman is, learning about the mythology and the world of Agent 47 through his hunting of this girl.” This girl being Katia van Dees, Hannah Ware in her first major film role. She’s pursued by both Agent 47 and Zachary Quinto’s John Smith, with allegiances and motives constantly shifting. Given the level of secrecy surrounding Katia’s past (Ware refuses to divulge any sort of details), it’s not too hard to imagine that she might have sprung from a similar gene pool to that of the modified assassin. Quinto, meanwhile, promises of John Smith that “the character is more complicated than the name”. It’s very much pitched as a three-hander, although there’s also space for Thomas Kretschmann as Le Clerq, head of nefarious corporation Syndicate International, and Ciarán Hinds as a scientist who might have had a hand in 47’s creation...

ROOTS OF THE CHARACTER

Despite all the mystery, the title character should still feel familiar to anyone with experience of the games, as working with the videogame studio means there’s a bible that has to be heeded. “We had to respect his origins, the mythology, the look of the character, who he is,” says Askarieh. “I mean, 47 can’t have sex, he can’t have a romantic storyline. There’s a lot of stuff that they wanted respected, and we’ve done all of that. I don’t think anyone can look at this movie and say that’s not Agent 47. It’s not like [the studio has] approval over everything, because that’s not the nature of the original deal for the first *Hitman*, but they’ve also not been cut out at all. They’re very happy with it.”

Yes, adapting a videogame respectfully but also successfully is no small order, as the genre’s previous strike rate attests. Askarieh wears his fondness for the Marvel model on his sleeve, calling the Disney-owned studio a “huge” influence. And he’s hoping that this film can capture a little bit of that magic, not least with a post-credits sting set to tease future instalments. Not that there’s a specific rule to follow. “You just make a good movie!” Askarieh exclaims. “It’s the same way they cracked the comic-book movie. Ask Kevin Feige why Marvel is now the biggest brand in the world – because they were true to the spirit of the characters, they made a movie for fans and non-fans alike, and they made good movies! I remember comic-book movies when they were making bad comic-book movie movies, it was always the same question. All those Roger Corman movies, and *Tank Girl*, and *Batman & Robin* – they’re all bad! Until *Blade* comes out, and then *X-Men* and then *Spider-Man*... and that’s all that is sustaining this business now.” While the team are clearly confident, time will tell if *Hitman: Agent 47* will be the film to give the videogame genre superpowers. ●

Hitman: Agent 47 opens on 27 August.



“HE COMES OUT OF NOWHERE!”

ZACHARY QUINTO
John Smith

What can you say about your character?

➤ John Smith is a mysterious guy, he comes out of nowhere and you’re not really sure where he fits into the dynamic of this world at the beginning. He forges a relationship with Katia early on in the movie, and that relationship leads them into a triangle with Agent 47.

Is it a more emotional character than what you’ve played in the past?

➤ It’s an action movie, so much more based in physical connection, but hopefully there’s an inner life underneath all the punches and gunshots. But it’s not a chamber-piece [smiles].

How would you compare action experiences on *Star Trek* with this?

➤ We had a lot more time on *Star Trek Into Darkness*, so there was more breath in the process. These fights have been much more gritty in their execution which I think lends itself to a kind of aesthetic that will suit the movie.

How many *Hitman* films have you signed on for?

➤ Two or three, I have to check with my lawyer...

Who’s tougher: Rupert Friend or Benedict Cumberbatch?

➤ I dare not compare the Brits, for fear that I would upset their ever delicate balance of mutual respect and talent, but they’re both incredible guys.

Logical choice: Quinto is the mystery man.



Stephen Kelly finds his way around *MAZE RUNNER* sequel *THE SCORCH TRIALS*

Remember *Vampire Academy*? How about *Beautiful Creatures*? *Beastly*? *The Host*? *The Mortal Instruments: City Of Bones*? Those were the films released after 2008's *Twilight*: feeble, fast-tracked cash-ins on a \$3.3 billion Young Adult fantasy phenomenon. When *The Maze Runner* came out last year, it seemed like the same thing was happening again – only this time to exploit the success of Young Adult dystopia *The Hunger Games*, the book trilogy that has now out-sold the *Harry Potter* series and whose three films, together, have grossed more than \$2 billion worldwide. After all, *The Maze Runner* was adapted from a novel whose cover carried the unattributed quote: “...A must for fans of *The Hunger Games*”, and did come out only six months after the superficially similar *Divergent*.

Yet Wes Ball's adaptation ended up refreshingly different – a financial hit, too. It centred around a boy called Thomas



BORN



(Dylan O'Brien), who wakes up in the Glade – an encampment in the middle of a huge, monstrous maze – with no memory beyond his name. Like Thomas, his fellow Gladers – all teenage boys – have no idea how or why they came to be there, and must figure out how to escape. (Which, of course, they eventually do.)

Mature, reverent and – at times – brutal, its tone was less YA, and more *Lord Of The Flies*: a film starring children that was not necessarily a children's film. Indeed, as the story moves on to its sequel – an adaptation of the second book in James Dashner's trilogy, *The Scorch Trials* – Ball is trying to move away from the YA arena altogether.

"[The films] are about growing up so the tone gets more mature, more sophisticated," he says, speaking to *SFX* from his office in Los Angeles. "Its ideas are pretty grown-up, and I think they set us apart from other →

TO RUN

TOTES A-MAZE

Could you survive these sci-fi / fantasy mazes?

LABYRINTH

→ This '80s gem gave us an iconic maze for Jennifer Connelly to solve. But along the way were many terrors: Jim Henson's monsters, the bog of eternal stench and wa-heh, David Bowie in a pair of tight leggings.



HARRY POTTER AND THE GOBLET OF FIRE

→ During the Triwizard Tournament, Harry Potter's final challenge is simply a claustrophobic maze of cursed hedges. To make matters worse, Lord Voldemort waits at the end.



THE MAZE

→ Forget *Fight Club* or *The Sixth Sense*, this B-movie classic from 1953 has the greatest film twist in the history of cinema: the maze is actually a dictatorship run by a giant frog.



THE SHINING

→ Having escaped from Kubrick's horrific Overlook Hotel, Danny Torrance runs into a hedge maze so eerie it has since become a classic symbol in horror movie history.



PAN'S LABYRINTH

→ Guillermo del Toro's imagination glimmers in the dark world of *Pan's Labyrinth*; a land of mysteries for young Ofelia to solve and, of course, a child-eating monster.



ALICE IN WONDERLAND

→ In Disney's 1951 adaptation of classic novel *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*, the surreal mind of Lewis Carroll takes Alice to a sinister hedge maze to evade the Queen of Hearts.



The boy scouts' camping trips got more intense every year.

Young Adult movies. In fact, I'm trying very hard to abandon the YA label once and for all... I think we're no longer a Young Adult movie. We've got kids in it, sure, but we've got a much larger world too. Now it's just an adventure."

SCORCHED EARTH

The Scorch Trials picks up right after *The Maze Runner* left off, with Thomas and various other Gladers – including Kaya Scodelario's Teresa and Newt, played by Thomas Brodie-Sangster – having escaped the maze only to discover they were imprisoned by an organisation called WCKD. For what purpose is unclear, but it has something to do with Earth having been devastated by a solar flare, followed by a pandemic of a deadly, incurable virus. Now free, they must search for clues about WCKD, with their journey taking them to the titular Scorch, a desolate landscape filled with obstacles.

"I pitched it as *The Empire Strikes Back* of the saga," explains Ball, "with these characters being on the run just like the rebels escaping from the Empire, and that leading to a journey. It's a very different engine this time, of these characters struggling to find out who they are and what their place is in this world. The first one reminded me of high school, that concept of breaking free from the world you were born into, essentially. And now the characters are out and trying to find their place in it, and wrestling with who they are as people, and what choices they are going to make, and which side of the line are they going to fall on. That's where our drama comes from: choice. What are they willing to do to survive?"

Now rid of the claustrophobic maze, *The Scorch Trials* begins to open its world not only physically ("We can finally see the horizon!" exclaims Ball), but story-wise too. One of the biggest criticisms directed at *The Maze Runner* was its ending, which operated on a frustrating sense of ambiguity, promising answers but only delivering franchise-building questions.

"The first movie ended on that

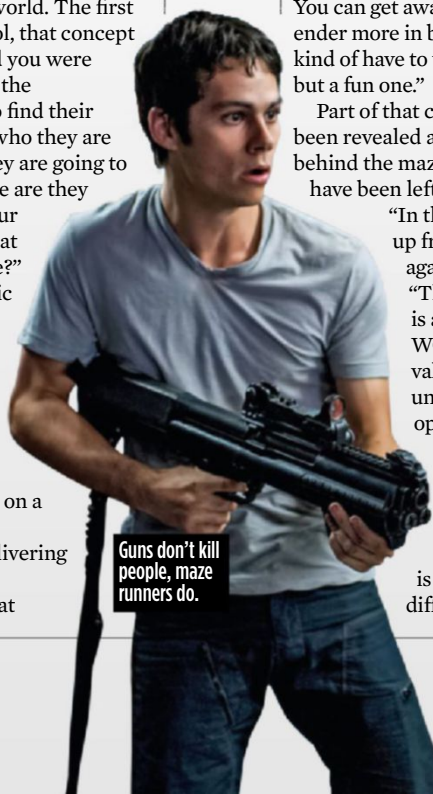
Ball pitches the series as "adventure" films, not YA.

pretty significant cliffhanger, which some people didn't like. But we have a nice arc in this movie. Yes, it's a middle chapter but it's still a whole – there's a beginning, middle and end in it. We also had to change from the book a bit. You can get away with the 'to be continued' ender more in books, I think, but in film you kind of have to wrap it up. It was a challenge but a fun one."

Part of that challenge was WCKD, who have been revealed as the shadowy antagonists behind the maze, but whose true intentions have been left vague and mysterious.

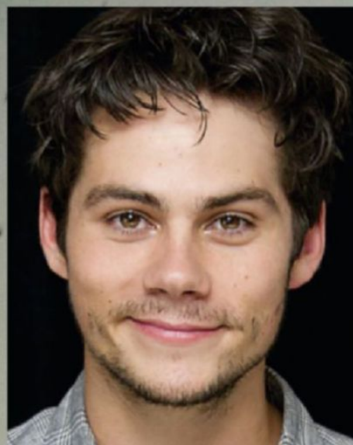
"In the second book, you see WCKD up front but then you don't see them again until the end," says Ball. "That's not the case anymore, this is about running away from WCKD. These kids are very valuable to them, and you'll understand why based on our opening and stuff. We had to make changes so people could understand and track it properly. The question is: will fans be open-minded enough to enjoy the movie as it is instead of seeing what's different from the books?"

Guns don't kill people, maze runners do.





“I pitched it as *The Empire Strikes Back* of the saga”



“I THOUGHT I WAS DONE WITH THE RUNNING...”

Dylan O'Brien heads into the Scorch

What's next for Thomas in this film?

→ Basically we pick up where we left off. I think, for Tom, there's a lot of guilt, and there's a lot he feels on his shoulders right now. He felt that in the first film a little too: the responsibility to get the kids out and to make sure everyone was okay. I think he's dealing with guilt from Chuck's death too. And as soon as they find out in this film that there's no safe haven, that they

could end up being worse off... I think that weighs heavily on him.

At least there isn't as much running this time...

→ I thought there was no possible way there could be more running! But there was still a lot. We were running up sand dunes sometimes... And I was cracking up because I thought I was done with the running – sort of.

Is it tricky playing a guy who can't remember who he is?

→ A little bit. It does give you room to invent and create. I think when you forget who you are, you can become a new person anyway. Sort of like a reset button. It was tricky for me to figure out his arc and his path, but I think I've realised that this just is his arc and his path... He's been through a lot of trauma now. Especially with Chuck. I don't know if he'll ever be able to not feel guilty about that.

Do you think the series is still *Young Adult*? Director Wes Ball doesn't...

→ I guess. It's difficult to say, I think it's a moot point. It is what it is anyway and it's going to be what it's perceived as. It's in that *Young Adult* world vein, no doubt. I think it's our job to think of it differently, though. Wes and I thought of these stories as sci-fi films, and if that YA label didn't exist they'd be old-school sci-fi – kid orientated sci-fi movies. Hopefully it can extend to all ages. It can be fucking awesome to kids. And awesome to teenagers. And people in their twenties and thirties, and parents who take their kids. That's the goal, that everyone takes something out of it.

Does that YA fandom make him nervous?

“It does a little bit but I will say that early test screenings have shown that most people think it's fine! There's always going to be the die-hards who want it exactly word-for-word. That was the case in the last one too – and that movie was really, really close to the book. I'll never win them over! The fans are very important to me. I am very aware of them and I wanna take care of them as best I can. But at the same time it has to exist as a movie on its own.”

IDENTITY CRISIS

Another element that Ball is hoping to expand upon are the characters themselves. While the

entire point of *The Maze Runner* was that the Gladers had no idea who they were, it did mean that we never got the chance to know who they were either. This especially goes for the connection between Thomas and Teresa, whose relationship is a pretty big part of the second book – although not in a way that translates to screen time.

“That's another thing about the book we've changed,” he says. “There was no way I was going to just let Teresa go away for two thirds of the books. I wanted her along for this journey. So there are slight changes to her story, but the end result will be the same and I think we've probably improved her character

in a big, big way. In this one we make her absolutely pivotal to the saga. Not just this movie but to the rest of the movies.

“This new dynamic gives us a chance to peel back the onion layers from these characters who had no memories. We try and do that in this movie a bit more, as much as we can get away with. We'll have more to do in the next one. It's fun to think about it in terms of this larger story. It's a good bet we'll be making the third one. We've got two stories to tell now and room to make it interesting and satisfying.”

Since Ball spoke to *SFX*, an adaptation of James Dashner's third book, *The Death Cure*, has been confirmed for a 2017 release. Obviously it's too early for any details but what's certain is that it will be the definitive climax – as opposed to *Harry Potter*, *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, who split their final films in two.

“It will not be in two parts,” laughs Ball. “Not if I have anything to say about it! I think stories are about beginnings, middles and ends. And not beginnings, middles, ends, and then another end. There's something off about four, and something very nice about three.” ●

Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials opens on 11 September.



Brought



To Book

STEPHEN BAXTER

The novelist tells us about his alien encounters with fellow writers

Words by Jonathan Wright // Photography by Joseph Branton

There are science fiction writers who, despite pleading from fans, choose never to return to fictional universes with which they're done. Then there are those who churn out sequels long after the law of diminishing returns has set in.

But there is a middle way here. It was in 1987 when "The Xeelee Flower", the first of Stephen Baxter's short stories to be published, found a home in *Interzone*. Writing the story, the author decided he needed "big, powerful off-stage aliens, just to set the scene". Thus the hyper-advanced Xeelee were born.

"All my influences and early work and so forth all poured into that outlet," he says. "Once that story was published, I was off and running. I've come to think over the years that it's not a bad thing to go back to the roots of everything, when my subconscious was a bit more in control probably – or the conscious mind was a bit less in control."

Subsequently, Baxter has often returned to the Xeelee timeline, most recently with *Xeelee: Endurance*, a new collection of previously unpublished and uncollected stories that its creator describes as "a fix-up with continuity". He's also working on a new *Xeelee* novel, although he claims it's "just a pile of notes at the moment".

FAR-EASTERN FANS

For all this activity, we can at least partly thank the Japanese. In 1997, Baxter visited the country and discovered his fans there loved the *Xeelee* books. "They live in a kind of space opera reality over there it seems, in their heads anyway," he says. "[Their enthusiasm] invigorated me."

Thus braced, Baxter thought about "one paragraph, a bridging passage" in the collection *Vacuum Diagrams* (1997), which referred to humans battling the Xeelee in a war that takes a million years. This keyed off a question: "How the hell do you wage a war across a million years with humans anything like ourselves?" You would need to control evolution, Baxter decided, or perhaps have "some supremely powerful agency monitoring and controlling and using human evolution as a weapon". Thus the *Destiny's Children* sequence, part alternate history, part space opera and which kicked off with *Coalescent* (2003), was born.

If that makes it seem as if Baxter's work is somehow self-referential, turns in on itself, nothing could be further from the truth. Covering the Stone Age and steampunk, a *Who* novel, children's fiction, journalism and, yes, the hard SF with which he's primarily associated, Baxter's output is not only prodigious and varied, but he's directly collaborated with Sir Arthur C Clarke, Sir Terry Pratchett

and, most recently, Alastair Reynolds, on the forthcoming *Medusa Chronicles*.

The latter is a project inspired by Clarke's 1971 novella *A Meeting With Medusa*, which features humankind encountering "living blimps" in Jupiter's atmosphere. The book fired the imagination of the young Reynolds and, in an email conversation, he suggested working together.

"If you're both keen and interested and engaged, then all obstacles melt away," says Baxter of working with other writers. "That's the root commonality of the whole thing, and the reason I do it, I think."

"Where it works really well is if one person pitches an idea and the other guy develops it and throws it back, and you end up with something."

COLLABORATION WITH CLARKE

Illustrating what he means, he recalls working with Clarke on *The Light Of Other Days* (2000), which features a wormhole that enables humankind to look back in history. "Arthur [suggested calling the device] something like 'chronologiscope', an *Astounding Stories* circa 1937 kind of name," recalls Baxter. "His way of thinking was to take an idea like that and develop it, so you have the research, you have the invention, you have the first implications. Whereas I was more for chucking the hero in the middle of it: the guy's got a problem with this for some reason."

Instead, the two combined both approaches to come up with something neither would have suggested on their own: "[Clarke's] orderly development, but with a big action plot emerging as the story developed".

As for Baxter's other collaboration, the *Long Earth* sequence with Pratchett, there's one more novel to come (yes, SFX did make a mistake in our review of *The Long Utopia* when we suggested it might be the final book in the series – apologies), but Baxter is remaining tight-lipped. "I'm allowed to say nothing, not even the title, although I think the main thing is it's written, done," he says.

Then again, this may be the way Baxter likes things. He doesn't much like talking about unpublished projects, in contrast to how Pratchett was.

"We were having mass panels on *The Long Earth* and all the ideas behind it, scared me to death," recalls Baxter of the 2011 Discworld convention. "I mean we had contracted for it, but it wasn't all that clear to me that we would actually be able to succeed in collaborating in the end, and there we were describing it to 5,000 people." ●

Xeelee: Endurance is published on 17 September.

Biodata

Occupation

→ Novelist

Born

→ 13 November 1957

From

→ Liverpool

Greatest Hits

→ *The Time Ships* (1995), a sequel to HG Wells' *The Time Machine*, took the Campbell, Philip K Dick and BSFA awards.

Random Fact

→ Baxter has worked on projects for space advocacy organisation the British Interplanetary Society: "It's indirect from the writing, but it keeps my brain fertile and fed."



**“IF YOU’RE BOTH
KEEN AND
INTERESTED
AND ENGAGED,
ALL OBSTACLES
MELT AWAY”**

You remember seeing 1990's *Total Recall*, don't you?

Directed by *RoboCop*'s Paul Verhoeven, the film tells the story of a construction worker, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has fake vacation memories implanted into his brain, leading to a secret agent adventure on Mars that may or may not be a "schizoid embolism" taking place entirely in his head.

"It's both very silly and very profound," says Gary Goldman, one of the screenwriters on the movie. "That's what I really love about it. It's still the favourite thing I've done in my career. It was really a dream come true."

But then so much of *Total Recall* seems like a dream. It was a big-screen adaptation of a paranoid short story by Philip K Dick, starring an Austrian bodybuilder with limited acting range who had somehow risen to become one of the biggest movie stars in the world. It was an ideas-driven sci-fi film, which still managed to have a body count that would put *Commando* to shame. And it was produced by Carolco Pictures, a company which – within a decade – went from producing blockbusters like *Total Recall*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and the *Rambo* series to going bankrupt.

Are we sure that any of this really happened?



Total Recall's long journey to the screen began in April 1966 when the Philip K Dick story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" first appeared in the *Magazine Of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. The tale of a nebbish desk clerk named Douglas Quaid who dreams of going to Mars found its way into the hands of screenwriter Ron Shusett, one half of the original writing team behind *Alien*, who bought it for a measly \$1,000.

Shusett got the script to Hollywood producer Dino De Laurentiis, who went bankrupt before he could make it. Arnold Schwarzenegger then discovered the project and took it to Mario Kassar and Andrew Vajna, two Hollywood moguls whose company Carolco Pictures was on the verge of becoming a major studio.

"Carolco was an amazing company," says Gary Goldman. "They paid the best prices, bought the best screenplays, and worked with the biggest name actors and directors. But it was more than that. They gave a huge amount of freedom. So long as they stuck to the genre they were working in, directors were able →



We bet Arnie ate the most of these three.

TOTAL RECALL
celebrates 25 years
this summer. Luke
Dormehl recalls
the movie which
stole our minds

TOTAL

KOBAL (3)

TIME MACHINE
TOTAL RECALL



RECALL

Life on Mars:
not what Bowie
expected.

“Moviemaking was just on the cusp of the digital age”

to work as auteurs. They were given total autonomy.”

Goldman had been working on another script with Paul Verhoeven, but jumped at the chance to do a rewrite on *Total Recall*. “The studio’s perception was that the screenplay by Ron Shusett and [*Alien* co-writer] Dan O’Bannon was great for the first half, but then totally fell apart,” Goldman says. “No one could figure out what Quaid’s motivation was when he reached Mars.”

There was another pressing change too: Arnold couldn’t very well star as a nebbish government clerk. “Before Arnie took on the project, the idea had been for this to be a really serious movie about a milquetoast character who has to become a secret agent,” Goldman continues. “After he came on board, there was no question about keeping this as dark as it had been. We had to embrace Arnold’s persona, and see if we could blend his type of film with the Philip K. Dick story.”

Changes were made. “We made [Schwarzenegger] a construction worker drilling rocks for a living as a way to justify his muscles,” Mario Kassar says.

Schwarzenegger was paid \$10 million for the role. This was twice what he had been paid for his last film, 1988’s *Red Heat*, and more than 13 times what he had earned on *The Terminator*, just six years earlier. Other parts in the cast were filled out by Sharon Stone, Michael Ironside and Rachel Ticotin. Production was established in Mexico City, where ten giant sound stages were filled with three-four different sets on each.



Total Recall is a spectacular movie, and not just because it contains arguably the strongest career performance from its male lead. The special effects in the movie are wonderful, almost without exception.

Rob Bottin, the special effects make-up guru who had previously worked with Verhoeven on *RoboCop*, returned to breathe prosthetic life into *Total Recall*’s cast of mutants – memorably including mindreading conjoined twin Kuato and a three-breasted hooker. Another special effects saviour on the film was visual effects supervisor Eric Brevig.

“*Total Recall* came at a really interesting time, when moviemaking was just on the cusp of the digital age,” Brevig tells *SFX*. “We were able to use CGI imagery in some scenes, but we still had to use an optical printer to composite the CGI imagery with the live action. It was a blend of old and new techniques.”



Is that Paul Verhoeven out-acting Schwarzenegger?

In this way, the film feels very much a bridge between the analogue special effects movies of the 1980s, epitomised by the likes of Verhoeven’s previous film *RoboCop*, and the digital infatuation of the following decade. The most notable use of CGI is a scene in which commuters are X-rayed on their way to work, revealing their skeletons and any concealed weapons they may be carrying.

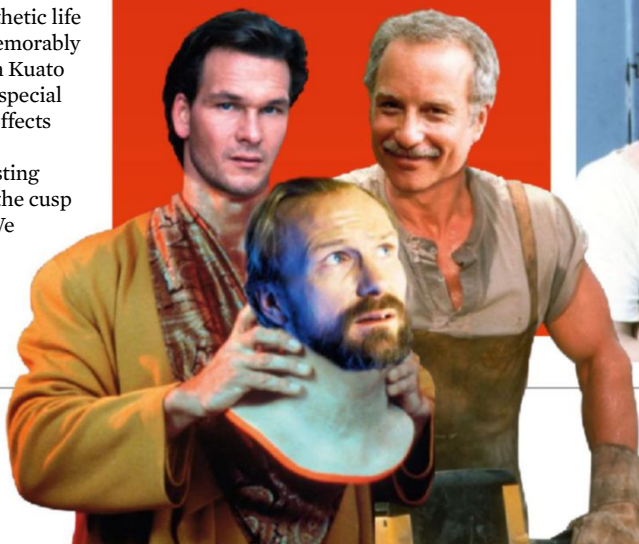
For the most part, though, *Total Recall* stands as one of the last major Hollywood movies to rely on miniature effects rather than computer-generated ones. One of the film’s most bravura shots shows Arnold Schwarzenegger arriving by subway train on Mars. In what appears to be one take, the camera starts on the star, pulls back to reveal the train, then rises into the air like a helicopter shot to show off the Mars landscape.

“That sequence was incredibly complicated, requiring three different scales of miniature, rear projection and motion-controlled cameras,” says Brevig. “Today almost all of that would be done using CGI. That would certainly make it easier, but I don’t know if it would make it more realistic.”

Working on a film can make it difficult to evaluate it objectively. Like a war in which you’re just one soldier in a much larger

THE TOTAL RECALLS THAT NEVER WERE

→ In Paul Verhoeven’s *Total Recall*, Douglas Quaid is played by Arnold Schwarzenegger. In Len Wiseman’s 2012 remake, Quaid is Colin Farrell. But what you might not know is that when *Total Recall* was still in the hands of Dino De Laurentiis, several other versions were planned – which would have resulted in very different films. David Cronenberg spent a year attached to the project. His choice of lead? William Hurt. Another suggestion was Richard Dreyfuss, the star of *Close Encounters...*, who’d already played an everyman-turned-unwitting-lead of a major sci-fi blockbuster. Finally De Laurentiis went with Patrick Swayze, hot off *Dirty Dancing*. Sets were erected in Australia – and then torn down when De Laurentiis ran out of money.



Rob Bottin finishes off another masterpiece.

KOBAL (6), REX (5)



Brain about to fry? Not a problem!

THE HERO MARS DESERVES

➤ Schwarzenegger wasn't just a hero on-screen. Three weeks before the movie was set to be released, Arnie discovered that a lacklustre trailer was putting off a large number of potential viewers. He personally phoned Sony executive Peter Guber, who was one of the people charged with distributing the movie. "Your studio is screwing up the publicity campaign," he said. Guber agreed to meet with Schwarzenegger. A different ad campaign was hurriedly launched, and approval ratings for the movie rose from 40 per cent to 92 per cent. "Arnold Schwarzenegger is such a smart guy, you can't dance around him," says producer Mario Kassar. "He has the best understanding of how to market a movie that I've ever seen in an actor. He knows where to market it, how to market it, who to market it to. He had done his homework, that's for sure."



campaign, few people have the kind of bird's eye view needed to evaluate how well things are going.

"With a movie like this, you see it in tiny pieces coming together very slowly, but you don't get a sense of what it's going to be like as a whole," Brevig continues. "It was only when I went to the premiere and watched *Total Recall* with an audience for the first time that we realised how well it played."

Total Recall arrived in cinemas in June 1990, landing in the UK one month later. It grossed an impressive \$119 million in the US, and a worldwide total of \$352 million, making it the year's number six movie. At that year's Academy Awards, *Total Recall* gained an Academy Award for its pioneering special effects. Eric Brevig and Rob Bottin were among the four men who crowded on-stage to receive the statue.

"It's something I recommend to everyone," Brevig laughs. "In our case it was even better because we actually knew we were winning in advance. *Total Recall* had such a landslide of votes that, for whatever reason, the Academy sent out a note beforehand saying we were winning a Special Achievement award. It meant we could go to the Awards knowing we were going to get an Oscar."

The cast and crew quickly realised the film had tapped a cultural vein. Waiting in a line at the airport with his new Oscar statue, Brevig was pulled to one side by an airport TSA agent wanting to know what was in his bag. "It's an Oscar," Brevig said. He pulled it out, wondering if this was going to delay his flight. "*Total Recall*," the guard grinned. "I love it!" He pointed to the baggage security terminal where passenger luggage was being X-rayed. "Like the skeletons in the movie," he said.

With its mix of innovative ideas and popcorn-munching action setpieces, *Total Recall* laid the groundwork for many of the sci-fi blockbusters we would see in the 1990s. *The Matrix*, for example, would appear to owe a debt of gratitude to Verhoeven's smash hit; extending the *Total Recall* plot contrivance from fake memories implanted in the head of one person to an entire planet.

However, even with plenty of imitators – including a best-forgotten 2012 remake – the 1990 *Total Recall* still stands as a classic sci-fi movie, with some genuinely original ideas.

"One of the most interesting things about the movie to me is that usually in a story about a man who has lost his memory the trajectory is about him getting back to who he used to be," says Gary Goldman. "But in *Total Recall*, we ask the question of what if, instead of finding out that you used to be this great good guy, the mind-wiped person is actually a bad guy. Then the new personality construct, which has its own values, decides he doesn't want to be evil. At the end of *Total Recall*, Arnold chooses to be his artificial self, rather than his natural self."

Mario Kassar went on to produce more films by the team behind *Total Recall*, including Schwarzenegger in *Terminator 2*, and Sharon Stone re-teaming with Paul Verhoeven in *Basic Instinct*. But even with these giant hits, *Total Recall* still holds a fond place in Kassar's heart.

"I loved it," he says. "*Total Recall* was a big, big summer sci-fi blockbuster, but in some ways it reminded me of a classic Hollywood film like *Casablanca*. There's something very timeless about it. That hasn't changed." ●



Kuato: the good-looking twin.



Mars wasn't built in a day.



Preparing the automated taxi driver.



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A large, glowing orange wireframe trophy is positioned on the right side of the image. It has a wide, flared base, a narrow stem, and a large, curved, umbrella-like top. The trophy is surrounded by a cloud of small orange dots, giving it a digital or particle-like appearance.

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CINEMA

THE MAN FROM UNCLE

Putting the cool in Cold War



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 116 minutes

▶ Director **Guy Ritchie**

▶ Cast **Henry Cavill, Armie Hammer, Alicia Vikander, Elizabeth Debicki**

◆ How do you take your spies?

A sardonic shot of vintage Connery? A cheeky, sparkling glass of Moore? A melancholy tumbler of Caine? In 2015 you may favour a gentlemanly sip of Firth or a high-energy hit of Cruise. Or perhaps you prefer a punchy bottle of Craig – straight in the face.

Guy Ritchie clearly likes a neat retro tipple. In a year that's seen the big-screen resurgence of the espionage genre he gives us *The Man From UNCLE*, a movie experience best served in a Martini glass as lounge music fills your bachelor pad.

Nominally it's a resurrection of the '60s spy-fi series that brought a touch of Bond to TV. But be warned. This film swipes the original's identity like a stolen passport. Ritchie has zero interest in the show's beloved iconography – there are no communicator pens, no triangular ID badges, no gadget-laden Oldsmobiles or

underground command centres with secret entrances. This refusal to play the nostalgia game ensures the movie never becomes an empty exercise in fan-fetishism but it may leave lovers of the series feeling shortchanged.

Ritchie does, however, nail the aesthetics of '60s spy flicks. The opening sequence in East Germany is pure Harry Palmer, all cobbles and Cold War distrust. Elsewhere the film has an authentic sunlit Euro-shimmer, conjuring a world where beautiful people do terrible things in style, accessorised by speedboats and helicopters. A title card declares ROME, ITALY with an ironic wink, complicit in the pretence that its audience has rarely ventured beyond Margate. Historically it's all rather confused, pulping an entire decade into a compact ball of cool – we're meant to be in 1963 but the women's fashions are pure Twiggy-era Carnaby Street – yet all is forgiven once you hear the fantastic score, a twangy, propulsive pastiche that distils the very essence of secret agent chic.

This is, essentially, *UNCLE Begins*, a prequel to the TV



Like it or not, the fellas would get a book shelf for that wall.



Alicia Vikander, Armie Hammer and Henry Cavill.

adventures. We start mid-mission, with suave, besuited CIA operative Napoleon Solo looking implausibly sharp against the decay of post-war Berlin. Sent to extract the daughter of a missing atomic scientist, he encounters his KGB counterpart, Illya Kuryakin. After the obligatory brawl the pair are ordered to team up and infiltrate a criminal cabal led by *The Great Gatsby*'s Elizabeth Debicki, who has a nice line in languid menace and looks like a *Vogue* photoshoot idea of evil.

Their reluctant, mismatched alliance is the heart of the film.

“It's a witty, entertaining ride, but there's a price to pay”

Nearly-Bond Henry Cavill inherits the Solo role; all languid Robert Vaughn vowels and laconic drawl, it's a performance that teeters on the edge of mannered, just rescued by Cavill's cavalier charm. Armie



LIONEL WIGRAM

Writer/producer
of *The Man From UNCLE*



Were you tempted to include cameos by Robert Vaughn and David McCallum?

→ We did talk about it and we have great respect for them, but ultimately we felt that the tone of the movie wasn't appropriate for that.

Are you already considering a sequel?

→ Guy and I are quite superstitious. We don't want to count our chickens. Obviously we always hope that there'll be another one - it would be great. We had a fantastic time making this film, probably the best time we've ever had making any film, so we'd love to have a chance to make another one. We love the world, we love the tone that we've established, we'd like to see further adventures with these characters. [But] we like to do one film at a time. We think that's the only way to do it.

Any chance of you bringing spin-off show *The Girl From UNCLE* to the big screen?

→ I love Stefanie Powers! But no, we're not thinking about doing *The Girl From UNCLE*. But listen, Alicia could be a great Girl from UNCLE, couldn't she? Good idea! I think we'll do it! Thank you! **Nick Setchfield**

Hammer, meanwhile, gives us an Illya far removed from David McCallum's lethal, cerebral moptop. This Soviet superspy is "hardly human", part-Red Grant, part-Jaws. It's East vs West, Olympian vs playboy. Caught between the warring alpha males, *Ex Machina*'s Alicia Vikander brings gumption, self-possession and wrestling moves to the role of boffin's daughter Gaby.

Ritchie's always been a kinetic, inventive filmmaker and this movie has style and energy to spare. The action scenes come with restless camerawork and

breathless editing. A climactic commando assault is propelled by pounding drums and dynamic use of split-screen. And the film is as funny as it's adrenalised, poised on a knife-edge between tribute and parody.

It's a witty, assured, entertaining ride, but there's a price to pay for these high-gloss larks. When Solo is strapped down for some full-bore torture you discover, with a jolt, that you just don't care. His impregnable, Teflon-coated cool has left you with no emotional engagement. Blame Daniel Craig's whipped nuts in *Casino Royale*,

but it's startling to encounter characters that are unashamedly ciphers, impeccably tailored but as deep as promo stills. This is how things used to be, isn't it?

But then this film has a distinct mission, far from the agenda of the modern Bond franchise. Like its glossy '60s predecessors it revels in surface sheen, in pop-art thrills and glamour. It's a sugar-high retro cocktail, expertly mixed, best served chilled. Knock it back and ask for another. **Nick Setchfield**

i Listen carefully and you'll hear a snatch of Jerry Goldsmith's original TV theme. Tip: listen to the radio...

REX (3)

CINEMA



The Sun was in a right mood today.

PIXELS

8-bit invasion



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 106 minutes

Director **Chris Columbus**

Cast **Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Michelle Monaghan, Peter Dinklage**

◆ **Pixels** represents a mash-up of sorts: your bargain basement Adam Sandler-brand loveable everyman schlub comedy blended with a high-concept action adventure from Chris Columbus, the man who helped launch Harry Potter into cinema history.

But while this seemingly weird combination does work to some degree, it all feels a bit like a shiny, high-tech arcade game cabinet that contains a glitch-ridden old copy of *Frogger*. The story of Sandler's former videogame champ and a couple of friends (including Kevin James's nerd-turned-President) battling aliens in the

shape of classic characters such as Pac-Man, it has some fun with the retro iconography-as-Roland Emmerich-style disaster movie, but the human side of things feels so generic as to knock the wind out of the endeavour. Columbus retains his eye for spectacle, but regular Sandler collaborators Tim Herlihy and Timothy Dowling deliver a script that's largely forgettable: here's the love story between Sandler and Michelle Monaghan's military science whiz; there's Josh Gad as the weirdo that only our heroes relate to... While no one wanted *Grown Ups* to break out in the midst of the sci-fi comedy, you're left feeling they could've plugged any actors in and the result would have been the same. **James White**

i The film was inspired by a 2010 short of the same name by Patrick Jean. Watch it online here: <http://bit.ly/pixels2010>.

ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING

Pegg Almighty



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

12A | 85 minutes

Director **Terry Jones**

Cast **Simon Pegg, Kate Beckinsale, Robin Williams, Sanjeev Bhaskar**

◆ **"With great power comes total irresponsibility,"** learns jaded teacher Neil (Simon Pegg) when he's granted God-like powers. It's a lesson played out with glee in Terry Jones's charmingly silly Britcom, but one the Python might have heeded himself: with a fantastically talented supporting cast at his disposal, the director neglects his duty to let them create something far funnier.

Semi-delivering on its promise of reuniting the Pythons on screen,

Absolutely Anything has them voicing the cartoonishly CGI-ed Intergalactic Council: a group of bickering aliens who set out to determine the worthiness of the human race by granting one randomly chosen person the power to make anything they wish come true. If they use this ability for good, Earth can join the ranks of the Council; if the power's used selfishly, the planet will be destroyed.

So it falls to Pegg's hapless loner Neil Clarke to unwittingly decide the fate of humankind, something that seems far less secure once Neil discovers his new gift and immediately uses it to get closer to his neighbour Catherine (Kate Beckinsale) – and give dog Dennis the voice of Robin Williams.



"Look, just because you've been watching *Family Guy*!"

There's fun to be had watching Neil bumble around. Throughout, Pegg is on fine form, with exaggerated reactions and comic exasperation dialled up to levels that all meet the film's audaciously absurd plot.

Sadly, big-name co-stars get short shrift, Robin Williams in particular. Voicing Neil's suddenly cognisant and articulate pooch

Dennis, it always feels like the great improviser is forced to stick to the script rather than be allowed off the leash. As such, it's all on Pegg and his goofy charisma to keep things moving. He may not be omnipotent, but he's gifted enough to save the day. **Matt Looker**

i Terry Jones cites HG Wells's *The Man Who Could Work Miracles* as an influence; it was made into a film in 1936.



Tom's backpack had its own security guard.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – ROGUE NATION

Enjoyment: Highly Likely



RELEASED OUT NOW!

12A | 131 minutes

Director Christopher McQuarrie

Cast Tom Cruise, Jeremy Renner, Simon Pegg, Rebecca Ferguson

◆ **Ethan Hunt's fifth impossible mission** starts with its money shot: Tom Cruise clinging to the side of an Airbus A400M. It's a crazy stunt, and to front-load the film with it is equally ballsy. But the true circumference of Cruise's cojones is evidenced in his decision to trust in storytelling, lovingly crafted setpieces and suspense rather than wedge himself into a bombastic, CGI-bloated jamboree.

The tangled plot sees Ethan obsessing upon the existence of the Syndicate, a SPECTRE-like organisation comprised of supposedly deceased agents. CIA director Alan Hunley (Alec Baldwin) thinks Hunt is paranoid, the Impossible Missions Force out of control. So Ethan must go rogue, calling on the help of his

trustworthy co-workers to track down his only link to the Syndicate – whispering, unblinking nutjob Solomon Lane (Sean Harris).

There is double- and triple-dealing galore, much of it arriving via mystery lady Ilsa (Rebecca Ferguson). The sequence in which Ethan and Ilsa first cross paths working the wings and rigging of the Vienna State Opera, while an assassination attempt plays out to “Nessun Dorma”, is *M:I:5*'s highlight. Director Christopher McQuarrie is a classicist, and each of his setpieces, including a breath-snatching underwater heist, possess a pleasing purity.

Rogue Nation doesn't quite have the scale of the fourth outing, its villain can't match Philip Seymour Hoffman's in part III, and Ethan Hunt continues to be little more than a startlingly capable cypher. But this is a fun entry in a series that's never failed to deliver a lively night out. **Jamie Graham**

i Shooting the Airbus stunt, Cruise had to wear special contacts to protect his eyes from particles so he could keep them open.



But he still insisted on being called Sir.

SELF/LESS

A change of mind



RELEASED OUT NOW!

12A | 117 minutes

Director Tarsem Singh

Cast Ryan Reynolds, Ben Kingsley, Natalie Martinez, Matthew Goode, Victor Garber

◆ **Swapping a consciousness** between bodies is a well-used plot idea, so if you're going to do it at all, you'd better have a compelling story to build around it. Sadly, Tarsem Singh's latest doesn't really deliver on that front.

What we actually get is Ben Kingsley's dying tycoon transferred to Ryan Reynolds's sprightlier frame courtesy of Matthew Goode's smooth-talking, visionary scientist and his high-tech lab. Assured that his new vessel is simply a vat-grown template, Reynolds soon discovers... Well, you can figure out the rest for yourself, even if you haven't seen the trailer. And once the film plays its hand, most of the big ideas and almost all of the emotional impact – beyond some average melodrama – is traded for a lot of pedestrian action scenes.

Kingsley makes the most of his early scenes and Reynolds tries hard to inject some life into this seeming corpse of a thriller (even if he never seems like the man he supposedly once was), but he just can't make it work. It all feels like the mind of 1966's *Seconds* has been transferred to a rote modern-day thriller with far less brains, but more exploding cars. **James White**

i If the “miracle machines” that swap the minds look a lot like CT scanners, that's, er, because they were...



Quick, pass the bug spray!

STRANGE MAGIC



RELEASED 28 AUGUST

U | 99 minutes

◆ **Despite occasionally decent** visuals and creatures, this attempt to meld a Shakespeare-inspired tale of love and pixies with stars-do-karaoke music selections comes across as a bland soup that tries to coast on the relative charm of pop nostalgia and one or two pleasing voice turns.

Given that it comes from people who have had a hand in making some of the best-loved fantasy and adventure films ever (director Gary Rydstrom and producer George Lucas), it's all the more annoyingly disappointing. **James White**

ALSO+OUT



Sadly **FANTASTIC FOUR** was being kept under wraps when we went to press. Probably because it's so amazing they didn't want our brains to explode with joy, right? We've also yet to see **SINISTER 2**. Hitting on 27 August: **HITMAN: AGENT 47** – he's a clone! It's SF! That's less clear when it comes to two 11 September releases: tower-block-outbreak flick **CONTAINMENT** and M Night Shyamalan's scary-grandparents horror **THE VISIT** (are they something supernatural, or just crazy old folk?). Finally, 11 September also sees the release of YA sequel **THE MAZE RUNNER: SCORCH TRIALS**.

HUMANS Series One

A multitude of synths

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | DVD/Download

▶ Directors Sam Vincent, Jonathan Brackley

▶ Cast Gemma Chan, Colin Morgan, William Hurt, Neil Maskell, Ruth Bradley, Tom Goodman-Hill

🎉 **Rejoice! A second series of** Channel 4's ace, remake of Swedish AI drama *Äkta Människor* is currently in the works. Given the first series' stellar ratings and consistently high quality, the only thing that could have stopped another run of the smash hit series was the robocalypse.

Humans' setting is its masterstroke: a parallel present rather than some far-flung future world. It's mundane and relatable, with one key difference: synthetic servants are as ubiquitous as smartphones. The Hawkins family is the latest to invest in an inhuman butler, but Anita (Gemma Chan) is much more than a glorified dishwasher. Five weeks earlier she and her synth pals were bot-napped from under the nose of mysterious fugitive Leo (Colin Morgan). And while Leo tries to reunite his unlikely family, Anita exhibits some strange behaviour in her new home.

It's a show that deals with tried and tested SF themes: can artificial life possess a consciousness? How

do robots fit into a world where they are superior to humanity? And the Big Question: what is it that makes us human? Alex Garland's sci-fi think-piece *Ex Machina* comprehensively covered the same subject earlier this year, but despite retreading more ground than it breaks, *Humans* is a compulsively watchable and thought-provoking slice of small-screen sci-fi.

The Hawkins family are the show's beating heart. Dad Joe (Tom Goodman-Hill) has no problem with synths, spending most of his day in a factory surrounded by them, but mother Laura (Katherine Parkinson) feels fundamentally uncomfortable about Anita's presence, believing her to be an appliance too far. Elder daughter Mattie (Lucy Carless) is a rebellious hacktivist with a pessimistic outlook on her future, son Toby (Theo Stevenson) is a horny teen who develops feelings for his robotic cleaner, while youngest daughter Sophie (Pixie Davies) sees Anita as a mother figure who can always be there for her. As a microcosm of a society where life-like robots are suddenly introduced the Hawkins' home proves a satisfying Petri dish.

A handful of loosely-connected side characters are also dealing with their own synth issues. Special Technologies Task Force

Merlin's costume designers were no longer trying.



Don't eat the yoghurt!
DON'T EAT THE YOGHURT!

officer Pete Drummond (Neil Maskell) investigates minor misdemeanours involving mechanoids before stumbling onto the case of a lifetime – the first human to be murdered by a synth. Meanwhile, across London, retired scientist Dr George Millican (William Hurt) has formed a father-son relationship with his near-defunct first-generation synth Odi (Will Tudor). Ideas of memory and identity are dealt with in a heart-tugging way here. George has no recollection of his dead wife beyond the stories Odi can tell him, meaning the only way

“The cast are superb, particularly the synth actors”

he has to cling on to her memory is by keeping his leaky bot ticking. It's touching stuff, and puts a new spin on the familiar Alzheimer's narrative. These disparate characters are eventually pulled

Reviews



CHRIS FRY

Producer of Humans



How close is *Humans* to its Swedish inspiration *Äkta Människor*?

→ We changed the look of the synths because we felt the Swedish series went too far into the “near future” idea. From about episode two, it’s generally the same concept but then the stories go off into different directions. I think the main difference, though, is that the family are more at the heart of it. They’re the central story. There are a few little nods to the original, though; one being that their synths were called hubots and one of the usernames that Mattie uses for her blog is “hubot”.

How did you go about casting the actors playing the synths?

→ They had to be a certain frame and size – no dyed hair, no tattoos, no piercings. We found extras that ticked all the right boxes and then we brought them to “Synth School”. We have a movement director [Dan O’Neill] who developed the ways of moving, and it’s all about economy of movement. They don’t gesticulate, the posture’s different... Really subtle stuff. It’s just not as easy as saying, “Stand still, do nothing.” They have to have that discipline, to be able to move elegantly, to take direction. There were some good ones and some not-so-good ones! **Stephen Kelly**



into the main mystery’s orbit, but almost unnecessarily so. They work best by fleshing out the world and giving intimate glimpses into how everyday life has been affected by the introduction of this technology.

The cast are superb across the board – particularly the synth actors, who have a remarkably uncanny manner that immediately marks them out as something Other. The show’s staunchly serialised format, meanwhile, proves both a blessing and a curse. It’s become a cliché to describe TV shows as “13-hour movies”, but

Humans is exactly that (well, a six-hour movie) with frankly hopeless episodic cliffhangers and some odd pacing from week to week. Watched back to back on DVD it flows much better.

At a time when it’s fashionable for small-screen sci-fi to deal in flashy, self-consciously quirky, fast-paced, action-driven cool, *Humans* bucks the trend with a compelling, slow-burn human drama. The show also airs on AMC in the US, where it’s proven less successful in the ratings. That might be the only thing holding *Humans* back from running for

years and years, because if this first series is anything to go by these synths could have a long shelf life.

✚ **Extras** Less than 15 minutes worth of featurette filler, including four minutes on the Hawkins family, four minutes on being a synth and a six-minute Making Of featuring the main writers. With so many rich ideas in the show it’s a shame more time wasn’t spent probing the creative minds behind it. **Jordan Farley**

i *Humans* was Channel 4’s most-watched drama premiere since 1992’s *The Camomile Lawn*, with 6.1 million viewers.

The staring contest was scheduled to go on until half past.

DRINKING GAME

Knock back a beverage of your choice every time...

- 🍷 A pair of characters hold a "secret" conversation in a stage whisper.
- 🍷 The sheriff eats an ice cream cone – or his secretary plays Patience.
- 🍷 Ethan fortuitously turns up at *exactly* the right place and *exactly* the right time to save the day.
- 🍷 Lights go on right across town as everybody's phone starts ringing.
- 🍷 A rebel has removed their tracking chip – and no one in authority has noticed...
- 🍷 It's absolutely pissing down.

WAYWARD PINES

Less *The Village*, more *The Village*

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | DVD

▶ Developed by Chad Hodge

▶ Cast Matt Dillon, Carla Gugino, Toby Jones, Shannyn Sossamon, Reed Diamond, Melissa Leo

❖ **The presence in the credits of** executive producer M Night Shyamalan (who also directed the pilot) means that it should come as no surprise that this 10-part miniseries hinges on a massive twist. What might surprise you is how early it comes.

For the first couple of episodes, you'll think you have the format figured. Though the title and setting suggest *Twin Peaks*, *Wayward Pines* comes across more like a modern-day update of

Patrick McGoohan's classic '60s series *The Prisoner* (and, thankfully, a better version than the 2009 remake).

Secret Service agent Ethan Burke (a gravelly Matt Dillon) is the Number Six figure; investigating the disappearance of two fellow agents, he suffers a car crash, wakes up in hospital in the titular Idaho small town, and soon discovers it's impossible to contact colleagues or loved ones – or to leave. Surveillance is omnipresent, and attempting escape means risking your life – though the "guard dogs" here are more conventionally monstrous than a whopping great weather balloon. The big difference is that Number Six was alone, whereas Ethan is soon joined by his wife and son.

Then, in episode five, all the town's secrets are unpacked in a series of expository lectures, which unequivocally relocate the series from surrealist territory to science fiction. The explanation is so bonkers that for a couple of episodes you may struggle to trust it, half-expecting a further rug-pull. But that never comes.

Anyone who feels they might have enjoyed *Lost* much more if only it hadn't taken so long to get to the ruddy point will feel at home in *Wayward Pines*. It's like watching the ABC show on 20x speed fast-forward; particularly once it starts to deliver how-we-got-here flashbacks. But even *Lost*-phobics may wonder if they should have maintained the mystery a little longer. After the

cat's out of the bag, the series loses a lot of its appeal; once we have all the answers, about all that remains is a struggle for power. The final scene leaves things open for a second series, but whether one could sustain audience interest is highly questionable.

No matter. Considered purely as a self-contained story, these ten episodes are satisfyingly bamboozling. Both the glorious insanity of the high concept and a Janet Leigh-in-*Psycho* approach to character deaths mean there is, throughout, a strong sense that no one is safe and absolutely *anything* could happen. And while the series may only skim the surface of its big issues – personal liberty vs the safety of wider society; the rights and wrongs of political violence – they are at least present.

❖ **Extras** Two featurettes (18 minutes): one discusses "creating a mythology", the other the look and feel of the series. **Ian Berriman**

i Oddly *not* included on the DVD: 10-part companion series *Gone*. But you can watch it online at <http://www.fox.com/gone>.



Yoga in space: pleasingly invigorating.

KNIGHTS OF SIDONIA Series One

Anime Galactica

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 7 SEPTEMBER**

2014 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Kobun Shizuno

▶ Cast Ryota Ohsaka, Aki Toyosaki, Atsuko Tanaka

◆ **Knights Of Sidonia** is an anime space-opera, made in CG, that's mildly interesting but not very involving. It recalls *Battlestar Galactica*, with the giant slab-like Sidonia carrying humanity through space. The story opens with the discovery of a teen who's grown up in the hidden corners of the ship. Then alien foes – they look like monstrous titans or sea creatures – attack, and the boy takes a key role in the fight.

Like many anime, *Sidonia* includes SF ideas seldom seen in Western animation, or even live-action. It's also a harsh show with a high death rate, and has anime's predilection for unclothed, busty girls.

Sadly the story is told unappealingly, with dull lead players and seen-it-before plot stratagems. One girl has a particularly dispiriting story arc, being transformed and infantilised in a way '60s *Star Trek* would find retrograde. The CG space visuals are adequate and the last big battle is derivative fun, but the puppet-like humans often deaden the emotion.

◆ **Extras** Behind-the-scenes material; press conference; screening Q&A; scoring featurette; clean credits.

Andrew Osmond

i Sidonia's animation was made by Polygon Pictures, who also worked on *Tron: Uprising* and *The Clone Wars*.



Some cheeky chappie was throwing bags of flour out of their aeroplane.

MONSTERS: DARK CONTINENT

Modern borefare

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 20 AUGUST**

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Tom Green

▶ Cast Sam Keeley, Johnny Harris, Joe Dempsie, Kyle Soller

◆ **Gareth Edwards's big-screen** debut *Monsters* was a calling card so good it saw the Nuneaton lad leapfrog from \$500,000 bedroom-edited indies to gargantuan-budgeted Hollywood blockbusters. Lacklustre follow-up *Monsters: Dark Continent* is unlikely to result in the same career turbo boost for its makers.

It sees a trio of best buds from Boston embark on a tour of duty with intense vet Frater (Johnny Harris) in command. The group

are dispatched to rescue four MIA soldiers but are beset by insurgents en route. Oh, and did we mention there are aliens in it?

The eldritch abominations of the original had a small but crucial role to play, adding tension and a weighty satirical subtext to the tale. Here, the monsters are like furniture – set dressing that's ultimately superfluous to proceedings, leaving little more than an overlong, uninvolved, self-important procession of modern war movie clichés. The characters are a largely forgettable bunch of crew cuts in fatigues and the action barely registers.

On the plus side, it looks superb and Harris is reliably watchable, but it never comes close to the original – or being a film that's worth your time.

◆ **Extras** Two featurettes about effects and a third concerning filming on location, amounting to less than 25 minutes. **Jordan Farley**

i *Monsters: Dark Continent* director Tom Green previously helmed six episodes of *Misfits*, across the first and second series.

“The characters are largely forgettable”



Barry's new flatmates were an odd bunch.

HORROR HOSPITAL

Bat's-arse and Robin

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1973 | 18 | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Anthony Balch

▶ Cast Michael Gough, Robin Askwith, Vanessa Shaw

◆ **Horror Hospital's** lead character sums it up neatly: “It's all so bloody crazy!”

A regular collaborator with William Burroughs and a distributor of sex films, Anthony Balch was a fascinating figure, and this campy horror-comedy is every bit as idiosyncratic as its late director.

When Jason (Robin Askwith, priapic hero of the likes of *Confessions Of A Window Cleaner*) visits a health farm run by Michael Gough's deranged Dr Storm, he discovers guests are being turned into grey-skinned zombies. Quite why remains unclear, given that they then do little apart from stand around in gym shorts...

A bizarre mash-up of '40s horror and '70s sexploitation, it mixes shower-scene sauce with gory decapitations, as Gough hunts down escapees in a shiny black sedan with side-mounted blades. The plot's paper-thin (expect plenty of capture and escape) but there's lashings of droll black humour, and at its best the film achieves a sort of warped pop surrealism. Skip Martin steals the show as Storm's dwarf sidekick, mugging shamelessly as he delivers lines like, “Don't forget to brush your teeth!”

◆ **Extras** Making Of; producer commentary; Robin Askwith interview; trailer. **Ian Berriman**

i The health farm exterior is Knebworth House, Wayne Manor in 1989's *Batman* – in which Michael Gough played Alfred.

VIDEODROME

Tune in and turn on



★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1983 | 18 | Blu-ray & DVD (dual format)

▶ Director David Cronenberg

▶ Cast James Woods, Sonja Smits, Deborah Harry, Peter Dvorsky

⚡ **A television set stirring like a tumescent organ; a guy developing a vaginal slit in his chest; a gun that shoots cancer...** David Cronenberg's S&M-tinged conspiracy thriller about a TV signal which induces brain tumours is overflowing with eye-popping imagery. What's sometimes overlooked is its rich vein of dark humour – as a visual metaphor for “programming” an assassin, inserting a fleshy video cassette is typically witty.

Like the Videodrome project itself, the film “has a philosophy”, blending all the director's

obsessive concerns – bodily mutation, “deviant” sexuality, the dangers of technology – into one heady, hallucinogenic whole. Certain details may now look quaintly analogue – those tapes are even *Betamax* – but its vision of easy access to images of executions and sexual violence seems ever more prescient. Put simply, it's the ultimate Cronenberg film.

⚡ **Extras** Arrow's four-disc set finally gives the UK the bonus-packed edition it deserves. A fair share are carried over from the US Criterion Collection release. “Forging The New Flesh” (28 minutes) is an excellent, insightful 2004 documentary on the effects. “Fear On Film” (26 minutes), an interesting 1982 round-table, teams Cronenberg, John Carpenter and John Landis to

tackle issues like censorship and test screenings. A period promo (eight minutes) interviews the director and leads. There's test footage for the POV of the film's “hallucination-recording helmet” (worth watching for Deborah Harry gurning at the end of the take!), and everything shot for seen-on-screen soft-porn *Samurai Dreams*. Also from the Criterion release: 2000 short “Camera” (seven minutes); some trailers.

There's plenty that's brand new too. Journalist Tim Lucas's richly detailed commentary combines painstaking research with personal on-set reminiscences; essential listening. Equally interesting: 26 minutes of alternate/deleted scenes from a TV edit, which spell things out more and provide further backstory. Three new interviews (50 minutes) quiz the director of photography – who's surprisingly ungentlemanly about the challenges of lighting Harry's face – plus (less interestingly)

“It's the ultimate Cronenberg film”

producer Pierre David and novelisation author Dennis Etchison. A 1997 BBC doc (20 minutes) interviews Cronenberg, Alex Cox and George Romero.

Then there's Cronenberg's student shorts “Transfer” (six minutes) and “From The Drain” (13 minutes), and primitive features *Stereo* and *Crimes Of The Future* (both 63 minutes) – very much avant-garde fare. There's academic interest in spotting images and themes which recurred later, but these are hard-going – especially *Stereo*, whose technobabble narration is narcotically nap-inducing. A Kim Newman talking head (17 minutes) places them in context. Finally, a 94-page hardback booklet should keep you occupied for several more hours. **Ian Berriman**

i In the ending originally planned, James Woods and Debbie Harry ended up with “sex organ hands”.



NAKED LUNCH

Bugging out

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

1991 | 18 | Blu-ray

▶ Director David Cronenberg

▶ Cast Peter Weller, Judy Davis, Ian Holm, Roy Scheider

BLU-RAY DEBUT Before David

Cronenberg had a stab at it, William Burroughs's transgressive, incantatory 1959 novel was generally considered unfilmable; as Cronenberg declared, it “would cost \$400 million to make and be banned in every country in the world.” Instead, the director interwove elements of book and biography to create an impressionistic effort which, if it doesn't deliver a hit of pure Burroughs, at least wafts second-hand smoke your way.

Peter Weller is exterminator, agent and addict William Lee, who encounters talking typewriters and centipede sex as he hallucinates his way around “Interzone”. Weller's deadpan delivery and reptilian gaze are perfectly aligned with Burroughs's sardonic prose, and when tasked with delivering passages like the infamous “talking asshole” sequence, he shines. Howard Shore's score makes effective use of free jazz saxophone by Ornette Coleman to conjure an atmosphere of dissolute delirium. And the queasy animatronic effects still stand up 24 years later.

A truly faithful adaptation of *Naked Lunch* may remain an impossibility, but Cronenberg probably got as close as anyone's ever likely to get.

⚡ **Extras** None. **Ian Berriman**

i Bomb The Bass's 1994 number 24 hit “Bug Powder Dust” opens and closes with dialogue samples from the film.



Kev had fun on the TV sex line, but his next bill was an absolute killer.



Let's hope she doesn't suffer from hayfever.

CINDERELLA

On the ball

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 24 AUGUST

2015 | U | Blu-ray/DVD

▶ Director Kenneth Branagh

▶ Cast Lily James, Richard Madden, Cate Blanchett, Helena Bonham Carter

❖ **Forget the superhero boom** – brace yourself for the fairytale boom, because in a few years you won't be able to move for live-action adaptations of Disney animations. Rather than adopt *Maleficent*'s revisionist tack, *Cinderella* is a refreshingly old-fashioned take on the fairytale.

You know the drill: Cinderella (Lily James) lives a life of servitude under her wicked stepmother (Blanchett) and two dreadful daughters. A chance encounter with a dashing Prince (Richard Madden) leads to the most luxurious ball in the land, a glass slipper and a happily ever after.

All the familiar ingredients are present and correct, but Kenneth Branagh's staunchly traditional approach is what makes it so magical. There isn't a knowing bone in *Cinderella*'s body. James anchors the film as the kind-hearted Ella but it's the world that really pops. The ball sequence especially is stunning.

By sticking so rigidly to the classic template the film has few surprises, and it isn't half as iconic as the 1950 animation – a companion piece, rather than a replacement. Regardless, *Cinderella* sets a pleasingly high standard for the imminent deluge of live-action Disney adapts.

➤ **Extras** An alternate opening; four featurettes; *Frozen* short "Frozen Fever". **Jordan Farley**

i Richard Madden wore a jock strap to (partially) hide the outrageous bulge in his tight trousers. The spoilsport.



And next up on Jeremy Kyle...

THE CREATURE WALKS AMONG US

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 24 AUGUST

1956 | 12 | DVD

❖ **This creature isn't just any creature**, he's the one from the Black Lagoon. In this third and final film in the Universal series, a bunch of white coats capture the injured amphibian – but then he starts to mutate...

The Gill-Man's rampages take up a small amount of the running time – mostly there's more rabbiting than *Watership Down*. It's all a bit soggy, despite decent underwater photography and monster make-up.

➤ **Extras** Trailer and three image galleries. **Russell Lewin**



Nicer than *Seinfeld*'s boy in the bubble.

009 RE:CYBORG

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

2012 | 12 | Blu-ray & DVD/DVD

❖ **It's the latest remake of an** oft-adapted manga. It was written and directed by *Solid State Society*'s Kenji Kamiyama. It's basically about a cyborg version of the X-Men. It looks gorgeous, and even justifies its 3D version. How could it fail?

Well, it does, spectacularly, thanks to dull, lifeless characters, too much cod philosophising and an utterly unconvincing theological rationale to its central amorphous threat. A real waste.

➤ **Extras** A nine-minute history of the franchise; promo video, trailers, ads; booklet. **Dave Golder**



Top Gear had made some major changes.

MUNSTER, GO HOME

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

1966 | U | DVD

❖ **The ghost train ride of '60s** sitcoms receives a big-screen upgrade – and a ticket to merry old England as the ghoulish clan inherit a stately, shivery pile in deepest Shroudshire. "Weirdsville!" exclaims wolf-boy Eddie. "What a cuckoo pad!"

What seems sharp and charming in half-hour bursts of black and white japey feels baggy and overblown in 96 minutes of lurid Technicolor. But Terry-Thomas does his reliable gap-toothed rotter schtick as it all turns to sub-Ealing crime caper.

➤ **Extras** None. **Nick Setchfield**



He's got his chopper out.

KULL THE CONQUEROR

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

1997 | 12 | DVD

❖ **This gleefully awful** adventure casts Kevin "Hercules" Sorbo as Robert E Howard's Atlantean barbarian, here defending his kingdom from the evil sorceress Akivasha.

It has a lively pace and occasional bursts of humour, but Christ: the hair! The pecs! The inappropriate rock music! As an example of the fantasy genre it belongs spiritually to the '80s – not to the year Peter Jackson began prepping his *Fellowship Of The Ring*.

➤ **Extras** Gallery. **Dave Bradley**

HOME ENTERTAINMENT



"The wife'll never believe this excuse..."

THE DEADLY MANTIS

Creepy, crawly

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 24 AUGUST**

1957 | PG | DVD

▶ Director Nathan Juran

▶ Cast Craig Stevens, William

Hopper, Alix Talton

⚡ **Atomic power paranoia** metaphor? An impassioned cry to respect the power of nature? A warning against the crazed acceleration of post-war science? Or just, y'know, a stinking great insect going "Boo!"?

This overlooked monster flick has none of the cultural resonance of *Godzilla* but its titular critter deserves a place in the big-screen bestiary. Unleashed upon the world when an ice shelf crumbles, the supersized mantis is a marvellously creepy presence, whether casting a long, spindly shadow on a remote Arctic base or scuttling up Washington landmarks in a bid to outdo Kong's iconic ascent of the Empire State.

You suspect some kind of deal was struck with the US military – the voiceover hymning the might of the US radar defence system invokes the feel of a government education film – but the copious footage of scrambling jets gives this B-movie a proto-blockbuster vibe beyond its budgetary limitations. And the mantis, eyes glowing, emitting an unearthly hum, is the authentic fuel of drive-in nightmare.

⚡ **Extras** Galleries of lobby cards, stills and posters; trailer.

Nick Setchfield

i Director Nathan Juran also helmed *Attack Of The 50 Foot Woman* and *The 7th Voyage Of Sinbad*.



Even by Olly's standards it was a bad hangover.

THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF

Wailing at the Moon

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 14 SEPTEMBER**

1960 | 12 | Blu-ray

▶ Director Terence Fisher

▶ Cast Oliver Reed, Catherine Feller,

Clifford Evans, Hira Talfrey

BLU-RAY DEBUT **The opening**

credits of Hammer's only tangle with lycanthropy play over a close-up of a weeping wolfman, which pretty much sums up the tone. More tragic fairytale than monster movie, it's not just the wolf who's sad – there's more than enough pain to go around.

Set in 18th century Spain, the first half hour sees the wolf's unsuspecting parents suffering one degradation after another: poverty, torture and rape, culminating in an unwanted child born on Christmas Day. Folklore has it that Yuletide birthdays mean curses, so the unfortunate Leon (first Justin Walters, then Oliver Reed) is gifted hairy palms and an insatiable bloodlust.

Hammer has a reputation for camp, but this is bleak. Beneath

the lavish costumes and sets is a depressing tale of systemic injustice. Squint a bit and it could be the story of any delinquent; despite the contrived romantic subplot, the film's insistence on love conquering the beast is really a plea for compassion. Reed gives good agonised face when he's separated from his girlfriend, but the young Leon is more affecting – no more able to escape his barred windows than he is his ultimate fate.

Effects-wise, it's functional enough, with one particularly effective time-lapse shot of Leon's hands becoming claws, but effects aren't the point – misery is. Can't blame the poor old wolfman for crying, then.

⚡ **Extras** From the old DVD: a 46-minute Making Of; a short featurette on lycanthropy; a gallery. New: a 13-minute piece looking at how the censors approached the film. **Sarah Dobbs**

i The original novel takes place in Paris. It was relocated because Hammer had built sets for an unmade Spanish Inquisition film.



Alternate universes always have goatees.

JUSTICE LEAGUE: GODS AND MONSTERS

Animated alternates

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2015 | 15 | Blu-ray/DVD/Download

▶ Director Sam Liu

▶ Cast Benjamin Bratt, Michael C Hall, Tamara Taylor, Paget Brewster

⚡ **Everyone loves a good** alternate universe story, and this latest DC animated movie gives us a fresh, Elseworlds-style spin on Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman. Superman is the son of General Zod, Batman is a vampire, and Wonder Woman is one of the New Gods, but when the arrogant Justice League are framed for murder, it soon becomes clear that a more dangerous adversary is moving against them...

A step up from recent efforts, this action-packed adventure sees the return of *Batman: The Animated Series* creator Bruce Timm to the world of DC Animation, and he brings a stronger sense of visual style. The continuity-heavy story is aimed more at fans than newcomers, and the violence is over-the-top at times, but this is still an entertaining "mirror universe" take on DC's three biggest heroes.

⚡ **Extras** An hour of featurettes – a Making Of, a guide to DC Elseworlds, and a look at Jack Kirby's *New Gods* – plus two vintage animated TV episodes and a 12-minute preview of upcoming animated movie *Batman: Bad Blood*. **Sarah Bullock**

i There's a companion web series – *Gods And Monsters Chronicles*. Watch season one here: bit.ly/godschron.

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Sepp Blatter showed up.



ROBOT OVERLORDS

The Kids Are All Fight

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

2014 | 12 | Blu-ray/DVD/Download

▶ Director Jon Wright

▶ Cast Callan McAuliffe, Ben Kingsley, Gillian Anderson, Milo Parker

❖ Think “robots” and “kids’ film” means cute WALL-E-alikes beeping adorably? Think again. This is about invasion, occupation and collaboration, not robotic friends or benevolent rulers.

Earth has been conquered by a race of robots, here to study humanity. The brief war is over, we’ve surrendered, and everyone is now confined to their homes; day in, day out, tracked by an implant in the neck. But one group of children discover a way to slip past the robots’ security, heading out in search of a missing father.

Two of the biggest surprises are Gillian Anderson and Ben

Kingsley, providing some A-list talent in a film that otherwise has a low-budget, ’70s TV series feel. They’re as good as you’d expect, but it’s still the children who are the stars of the show, rebelling against the robots and their rules just as naturally as they’d normally rebel against parents, and (inevitably) discovering ways to fight against the robots that the adults had never managed.

It’s a very British invasion, but that’s not a bad thing, and some genuine shocks along the way help to mitigate an over-neat resolution.

❖ **Extras** Making Of; effects featurette; behind-the-scenes at Manchester Comic Con with Gillian Anderson; the cast reading from the tie-in novel; music video.

Rhian Drinkwater

i Director Jon Wright says he was inspired by “a dream about being in my house, with giant robots walking by in the street”.

EYES WITHOUT A FACE

Getting under the skin



★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED 24 AUGUST**

1960 | 15 | Blu-ray & DVD (dual format)

▶ Director Georges Franju

▶ Cast Pierre Brasseur, Alida Valli, Edith Scob, Francois Guerin, Juliette May

BLU-RAY DEBUT Back in 1960, the idea of a face transplant was pure high-concept sci-fi. Today it’s a genuine procedure – though thankfully very different to the approach that Pierre Brasseur’s Dr Génessier takes here...

A car crash at the start of the film leaves Génessier’s daughter Christiane horribly disfigured – and thought dead by the wider world. Behind closed doors, she drifts around the house in an eerie mask. Her dad, meanwhile, is cooking up a scheme to find her a new face by taking someone else’s.

Georges Franju’s cruel masterpiece stands apart from

most horror films of the ’60s. Sure, it shares some familiar elements – it’s a mad scientist movie of sorts – but in tone it couldn’t be more removed from Hammer’s gory

output. Franju is less interested in scares and more in making you understand Génessier’s actions and feel for Christiane. At its heart, this is a tragedy.



The anxious wait for the painter to varnish the balustrade continued.

That’s not to say there aren’t moments of nastiness; the scenes of surgery are still effective, even if the actual face peel lingers just a second too long, and the sinister way Génessier’s companion Louise snares an innocent girl is very disturbing.

Still, it’s Franju’s eye for surreal imagery that lingers. Christiane’s final scene is dream-like and lovely, while the monochrome makes it hard to tell where the flesh ends and her mask begins, lending it an added layer of uncanny valley creepiness. For a film that hinges on surgical terror, it’s extremely beautiful.

❖ **Extras** Of most interest is “Les Fleurs Maladies De Georges Franju”, a 45-minute retrospective on the film. There’s a commentary by critic Tim Lucas, and a lengthy interview with Edith Scob (Christiane). You also get two shorts, “Monsieur Et Madame Curie” and “La Premiere Nuit”, and a booklet of essays. **Will Salmon**

i When the film was screened at the 1960 Edinburgh Film Festival, seven members of the audience apparently fainted.



Barry's spa day just wasn't working out.

FIRST MAN INTO SPACE

He's quite a mess

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** 24 AUGUST

1959 | PG | DVD

▶ Director Robert Day

▶ Cast Marshall Thompson, Marla

Landi, Robert Ayres, Bill Nagy

• The family tree of this

British SF-horror might be the most interesting thing about it. It emerged from the same stable as bonkers brains-attack B-movie *Fiend Without A Face*. It seems likely it was an inspiration for '70s spoof *The Incredible Melting Man*. And it seems inconceivable that it wasn't inspired by *The Quatermass Experiment*.

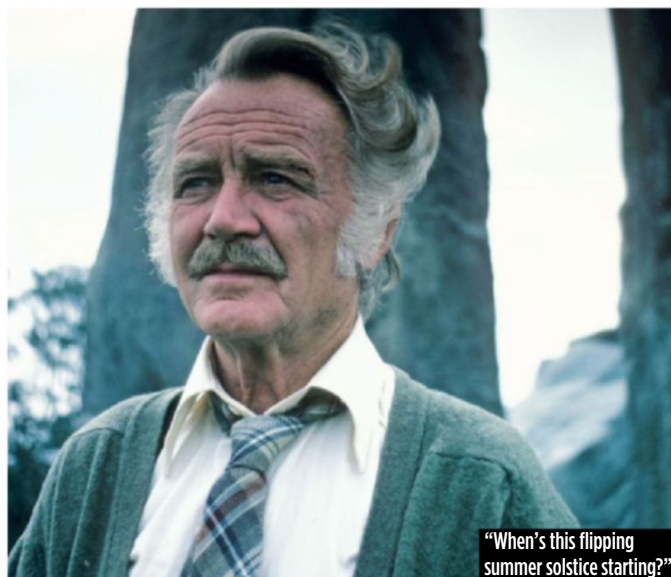
Like Nigel Kneale's series, this post-Sputnik, pre-Gagarin tale follows an astronaut who transforms into a monster. In this case, a cloud of space dandruff is the downfall of cocksure pilot Dan Prescott. Soon he's staggering across New Mexico, hungry for blood.

In its early stages the film is drollly talky. Tasked with mounting a missile base in Hampstead Heath, director Robert Day is forced to fall back on stock footage. And neither Prescott's brother or his "dame" seem particularly cut up when he's missing, presumed dead.

Things pick up when he goes on the loose, though: the petrified monster suit, with its one madly glaring eye, is simple but effective. And when, at the climax, the indurate astronaut starts to recover his humanity, the pathos is palpable.

• **Extras** Trailer. **Ian Berriman**

i Actress Marla Landi (who plays the astronaut's girlfriend) went on to present children's TV series *Play School*.



"When's this flipping summer solstice starting?"

QUATERMASS

Professor's parting piece

★★★★★ EXTRAS ★★★★★

▶ **RELEASED** OUT NOW!

1979 | 15 | Blu-ray

▶ Director Piers Haggard

▶ Cast John Mills, Simon

MacCorkindale, Barbara Kellerman

BLU-RAY DEBUT This last hurrah

for rocket scientist Bernard Quatermass, first aired on ITV two decades after his '50s heyday, is widely considered a failure – but perhaps a reappraisal is in order.

Set in the near-future, it's a depressingly downbeat affair in which the world's youth are being harvested by an unknowable alien force. Gathering at stone circles in the belief they'll be transported to another, better world, they're instead blasted to dust by an intergalactic energy beam. Why remains unclear – perhaps someone out there, like the aliens of *Torchwood: Children Of Earth*, finds essence of earthling intoxicating? But that lack of clarity doesn't diminish the power of these sequences, particularly one which sees thousands annihilated at Wembley Stadium.

Quatermass creator Nigel Kneale skilfully sketches a broken Britain where machine-gun toting

gangs battle in ruined streets, and mercenary "Pay Cops" are the only law and order. Shot entirely on film (and looking glorious in this HD transfer), it's a production with impressive scale. And John Mills invests the aged Prof with both gravitas and vulnerability, to make this a fitting final bow.

Its Achilles heel? The kids. Late 1979 was the tail-end of punk, by which time Kneale's cult of hippy "Planet People" must have seemed pretty old hat (the script, originally intended for the BBC, was first delivered in 1973, then shelved). That's of no consequence from the perspective of 2015, but it remains the case that with their gormless chant ("Leh! Leh! Leh!") and silly choreography (a random twirl every five yards) they're a thoroughly annoying bunch.

• **Extras** Widescreen theatrical cut *The Quatermass Conclusion* (at cinemas the same year) trims the four-part serial down from 335 minutes to 106. You also get a gallery and miscellaneous scraps (some mute): textless end titles; ep recaps; a trailer. **Ian Berriman**

i The original plan was to shoot a "reaping" at Stonehenge; it was switched to Wembley after permission to film was refused.

(ROUND UP)



Directed and presented by William Shatner, hour-long doc **CHAOS ON THE**

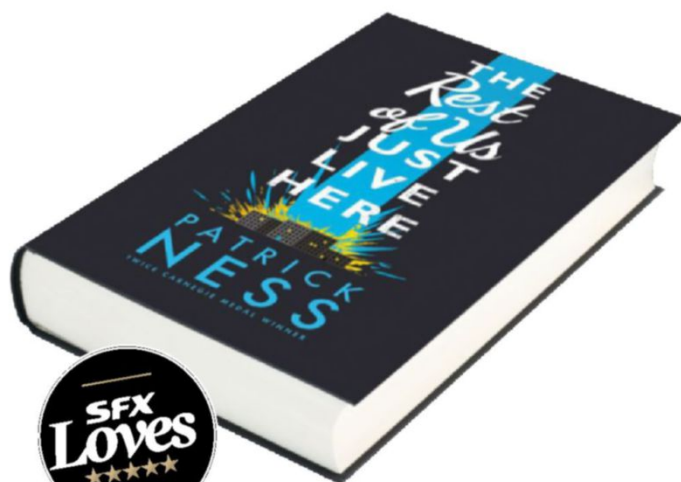
BRIDGE (2014, digital platforms) takes a candid look at *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s troubled birth – in particular the outrageous meddling of Gene Roddenberry's lawyer, who rewrote scripts in his name! Those who've seen the *TNG* Blu-ray extras won't learn much, but it's good to hear from writers Maurice Hurley and Tracy Tormé, absent from those.

Munster, Go Home (see page 101) isn't the only Munsters film recently released. TV movie **HERE**

COME THE MUNSTERS

(1995, PG, DVD) starts from scratch, as the family settle in California. The new cast are decent, it's more respectful to the '60s sitcom than 1988 revival *The Munsters Today*, and four of the original actors make brief appearances. The 1939 remake of **THE CAT AND THE CANARY** (PG, DVD) features all the typical elements of the Old Dark House genre: a spooky mansion; a gathering of relatives; cobwebbed secret passageways; creepy goings-on with a rational explanation.

Starring Bob Hope, it's less stylish than the silent 1927 original, with the emphasis on comedy; while some of Hope's quips are dreadfully corny, others still tickle the funny bone. Finally, sleazy Taiwanese horror **ZOMBIE FIGHT CLUB** (2014, 18, DVD) rips off *The Raid* for an hour, then relocates to an arena where people must battle zombies to the death. There's decent fight choreography and OTT gore aplenty, but it's the attitude to women – there to be objectified and abused – that lingers in the memory.



THE REST OF US JUST LIVE HERE

Life on the fringe of apocalypse

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 27 AUGUST**

352 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author **Patrick Ness**

► Publisher **Walker Books**

Who remembers that

format-breaking *Buffy* episode “The Zeppo”? It was the one in which the B-plot became the A-plot, spotlighting the comedy misadventures of the show’s fifth-wheel character Xander, while the rest of Scooby Gang tackled the latest supernatural apocalypse in the background.

Multi-award-winning YA author Patrick Ness’s latest novel runs with this idea, combining it with the “Lower Decks” trope – episodes where minor supporting characters come to the fore. *The Rest Of Us Just Live Here* is the story of a group of ordinary high school students. They have to get on with their lives while their town’s answer to the “Scoobies” deal with all the apocalyptic weird stuff in the extreme fringes of the book. This isn’t a story about

Chosen Ones. This is a story about Average Ones.

And it’s simply beautiful.

Mikey is on the verge of graduating. There’s a lot that stands in his way. Not so much the portal to another dimension that’s opened up, unleashing evil immortals into the town – the “indie kids” can deal with that. They usually do. Though it’d be handy if they didn’t blow up the school again. Before the vacations, at least.

Of more concern to Mikey are his anorexic sister, his drunken father, his politically ambitious mother, his OCD and the fact that the girl he fancies has casually mentioned how she’s attracted to a new guy at school.

“This is a story about Average Ones”

Yes, he’s a mess of neuroses. Yes, there’s the potential for some emotionally manipulative soap opera here. But Ness writes with a wit and insight that means you grow to love these characters – faults and all – rather than being emotionally blackmailed into loving them. In short, they feel all too real; you mixed with kids like these when you were at school.

Don’t assume that this conceit inevitably leads to a trite, “we’re all special inside” message. Ness is too clever to deal in such clichés. In a world where *X Factor* contestants all believe that the secret to success is merely *wanting* it hard enough, this book’s message is: it’s perfectly okay to make do, as long as you’re happy.

Ness doesn’t keep the supernatural totally at arm’s length. One of Mikey’s friends, Jared, is a demigod, the result of a previous “supernatural incursion”. This cleverly gives the impression that there have been previous “seasons”, with their own arc plots and Big Bads. While Ness riffs off *Buffy* (and *The Vampire Diaries* and *Twilight*) tropes, this is no mere parody. He’s clearly very fond of the genre, and other fans of the genre will love it.

Another wry move is the little chapter summaries that tell you what’s going on in the “bigger” plot, full of characters with hipster names: Satchell, Kerouac, Dylan, a couple of Finns. They’re like an on-screen TV guide blurb, with added sarcasm.

It’s all very gentle, admittedly. There are two big action setpieces, though they’re only described from Mikey’s POV. Mostly, however, this is a relationship drama. That’s not to say that there aren’t twists and surprises, though some of the broader plot beats are old reliables, the journey from A to B takes a bunch of unpredictable detours.

These characters may be fighting internal demons instead of real ones (there’s even a great gag about the lack of metaphors in the book) but their issues are tackled with engaging sensitivity. Thoroughly recommended.

Dave Golder

i Ness says he’s like a “newly-born baby giraffe” when he gets on a bike. “My cycling nickname is Aargh Splat.”



THE LONEY

Faith and fear

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 27 AUGUST**

278 pages | Hardback

► Author **Michael Hurley**

► Publisher **John Murray**

Horror creeps slowly into

The Loney, like a gathering mist inexorably swallowing the sun.

At the centre of the story are two brothers: the narrator and mentally handicapped sibling Hanny. Their deeply Catholic mother regards Hanny’s condition as a test of her faith and believes that a pilgrimage to a shrine on the Lancashire coast will cure her son. So they set off with their church group, hoping for a miracle.

Andrew Michael Hurley’s evocation of the dampness and grey misery of his setting, *The Loney* – “that strange nowhere between the Wyre and the Lune” – is so immersive it’s almost a surprise the pages aren’t sodden and dripping. It’s a landscape as bitterly unwelcoming as the locals, whose chilly hostility adds to the uneasy sense of brooding menace. The clash between the modern and the ancient, between the urban and the rural, are horror staples from Dennis Wheatley to *The Wicker Man*, but Hurley’s sharply drawn characters and descriptive powers dispel any sense of over-familiarity.

The Loney weaves its spell slowly but once it’s taken hold, it drags the reader into the darkness where faith dare not show its face for fear of being snuffed out like a sputtering candle. **David West**

i *The Loney* was originally published by Tartarus Press back in October 2014, in a limited run of just 300 copies.



THE KARMA BOOTH

Resurrection blues



► **RELEASED 20 AUGUST**

392 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Jeff Pearce

► Publisher Harper Voyager

❖ Asking “What if?” is a big part of writing SF – but while a vivid imagination is important, believability’s just as vital. However wild your central concept might be, it’s got to be strong enough to convince your audience. This is where *The Karma Booth* runs into problems.

It’s the story of a mysterious new tech that can simultaneously execute a murderer and bring one of their victims back to life. As use of the “Karma Booths” spreads across the world, an investigator discovers that the returned victims are showcasing strange powers. Then a war criminal survives the booths and starts hunting the victims down, one by one...

Debut author Jeff Pearce showcases some interesting ideas and a literate prose style, but isn’t up to controlling this strange blend of globe-trotting thriller, metaphysical weirdness and Michael Crichton-esque sci-fi. The book might have worked as a more literary fantasy, but anchoring it as a techno-thriller just draws attention to its arbitrary and unconvincing nature. The oddball storytelling can’t support Pearce’s provocative themes, so it ends up feeling more like an eccentric thought experiment than a genuinely satisfying novel. **Saxon Bullock**

i Jeff Pearce has written extensively in non-fiction, including a detailed history of Italy’s 1935–41 invasion of Ethiopia.



FOOL'S QUEST

No more lone wolf



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

744 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author Robin Hobb

► Publisher Harper Voyager

❖ **Picking up almost** immediately from *Fool’s Assassin* – which saw ageing assassin FitzChivalry Farseer returning after over a decade’s absence – the second book in the *Fitz And The Fool* series is spectacularly fast-paced compared to its predecessor.

It sees the true plot of this trilogy starting to emerge: find the school of the White Prophets in Clerres and kill them all. But of course the path to that isn’t clear; nor does it run smoothly. Fitz, as usual, takes his sweet time.

Fool’s Quest is as bittersweet a homecoming for us as it is for Fitz. In *Fool’s Fate*, Hobb wrote “If you go back after the people are gone, then all you can see is what is not there anymore.” Many of the characters we knew and loved from previous books are gone, so returning to Buckkeep is emotional. These absences around the castle gape – but not in a way that negatively impacts on the story. Instead, those holes in Fitz’s life feel like holes in your own.

But the story is filled with great happiness as well as Fitz’s trademark melancholy. There’s

one particular moment that may bring you to tears when you read it; a moment that feels so profoundly right it’ll take your breath away; a moment to fill your heart to bursting with joy.

Hobb seamlessly blends intrigue, action and characters who feel so real that they become more than words on a page: they are the closest friends or bitterest enemies. Every second spent in her world is a privilege and a pleasure.

“Filled with happiness as well as melancholy”

Should you jump into this trilogy before reading its predecessors? No: you’ll miss all the emotional weight that comes with knowing these characters down to their bones. But you should absolutely pick up 1995’s *Assassin’s Apprentice*, where it all began, and start the journey; not only will it be endlessly rewarding, but the destination is sure to be satisfying. **Bridie Roman**

i Hobb’s trilogy *The Liveship Traders* (*Ship Of Magic*, *The Mad Ship* and *Ship Of Destiny*) is reissued on 10 September.



THE FIFTH DIMENSION

Singularity of the soul



► **RELEASED 9 SEPTEMBER**

283 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Martin Vopenka

► Publisher Barbican Press

❖ A blend of Franz Kafka and Philip K Dick, this very personal book drags you down the author’s own rabbit hole. How much you engage with it will depend on your tolerance for high-flown metaphysical meanderings.

Ex-physicist Jakub leaves his family for a year to take part in a secretive and solitary experiment in the Andes. He takes one book, Kip Thorne’s *Black Holes & Time Warps*, to re-engage with science. His time there is punctuated with odd occurrences: an encounter with a Native American hunter, a gay seduction, and (possibly) a murder.

Martin Vopenka’s strength is to invest insignificant incidents with significance, then challenge their veracity. Only the stark landscape, a raw manifestation of reality, seems to be at all real, and Jakub’s soul is melting on it. Isolated, Jakub formulates a theory as to the spiritual nature of the universe that reflects the high weirdness of black holes. Either he’s correct, or he’s bonkers. The author teasingly leaves the issue unresolved.

The Fifth Dimension flings open the doors to those existential worries about death and meaning we try to bury. Even if you don’t enjoy it, it’ll make you think. **Guy Haley**

i Martin Vopenka loves mountains, having spent time visiting them in Asia, South America, Europe and Antarctica.



THE HIDDEN ART OF DISNEY'S GOLDEN AGE

Puppets and princesses



► **RELEASED 8 SEPTEMBER**

208 pages | Hardback

► Author **Didier Ghez**

► Publisher **Chronicle Books**

► **This book (full title: *They Drew As They Pleased – The Hidden Art Of Disney's Golden Age: The 1930s*)** focuses on four concept artists who worked at the studio in its early years (though the cover may claim it's about the '30s, there are many concept drawings for *Pinocchio*, *Fantasia* and *Bambi*, all released in the '40s).

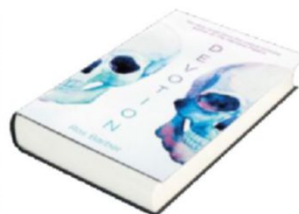
The artists include Gustaf Tenggren, a Swedish successor to Britain's Arthur Rackham. Tenggren defined *Snow White's* gnarly forests and the sloped Alpine architecture of *Pinocchio*, and his drawings and paintings are the most dramatic in the book.

“One for students of cartoon creation”

Generally, though, this is an unspectacular volume. It's full of doodles and drawings which reveal their artists' technique and imagination without being very eye-catching; many are for toons that were never made. For example, several pages are devoted to the abandoned “Mickey's Sea Monster”, with loads of design ideas for a Disney sea serpent (the best monsters are cute but also a bit scary). There are also glimpses of an unmade *Fantasia*-like cartoon called *Japanese Symphony*, with parasol-wielding geishas and dancing butterflies.

The text is short (less than 40 pages worth) but highly informative, quoting extensively from the various artists' letters and memoirs; there's a particularly interesting section on Disney's first women artists, who were thrown into what one writer calls “a male monkey cage”. One for serious students of cartoon creation and its untold stories, rather than lovers of pretty pictures. **Andrew Osmond**

i It was “inspirational sketch” artist Albert Hurter who decided that the logical costume for a Disney duck was a sailor suit!



DEVOTION

Think happy thoughts!



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

288 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author **Ros Barber**

► Publisher **Oneworld**

► **Why do bad things happen?**

The Marlowe Papers author Ros Barber isn't the first to tackle this question, and won't be the last. That she does so through quantum theory and neuroscience might sound intriguing, but unfortunately the result is more messianic muddle than profound persuasion.

The near future. After a busload of atheist students is bombed, psychologist Finlay has to assess the bomber, April. The question isn't if she did it, but why; many believe her case proves religious fervour should be reclassified as insanity. Meanwhile, scientific research on shooting electrical currents through the brain is giving people spiritual experiences and leaving them happier versions of themselves.

Ultimately, the novel seems to conclude, positive thinking is the key. We shape the world with our thoughts, see, so if we think nice things and stop worrying, everything will be awesome. And never mind the victims in all this, because we're all connected and death doesn't matter. “Think of the good done in the name of those who die early,” April tells Finlay; “the charities and foundations that people set up.” Spectacular – who cares about actual suffering, if it inspires those who witness it to be better people? **Nic Clarke**

i Shakespeare expert Barber's debut novel posits that Christopher Marlowe was the real Bard.

BULLET TIME A BOOK IN BULLET POINTS



STAR WARS: IMPERIAL HANDBOOK

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

160 pages | Hardback

► Author **Daniel Wallace**

► Publisher **Titan Books**

● Subtitled “A Commander's Guide”, this is a *Star Wars* reference book masquerading as an artefact from a galaxy far, far away.

● Luke Skywalker's intro explains that the book dates from just before the destruction of the first Death Star, and contains all the information a new Imperial officer would need to understand the Empire's military.

● Featuring entries by recognisable Imperial types (Captain Pielt, Admiral Ozzel, the Emperor himself), it's packed with info on the Empire's history and hardware, Rebel scum and more – though the propaganda tone means we probably can't believe everything.

● Rebel commanders have scribbled comments in the margins, so we get to see Han and Leia's “handwriting”.

● Look carefully and you can find hints at the new, cross-media *Star Wars* continuity – Han confirms that, as in the old “Legends” expanded universe, he attended the Imperial Academy before becoming a smuggler.



Reviews



HOUSE OF SHATTERED WINGS

Colonialism and culture clash



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

416 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Aliette de Bodard

► Publisher Gollancz

❖ **Aliette de Bodard has made** a name for herself imagining futures and alternate histories that showcase non-Western cultural landscapes (Chinese, Aztec) and characters. Her latest is an urban fantasy murder mystery, set among the backstabbing elite Houses of a ruined post-war Paris.

It's a setting immersed in shabby-chic decadence, and in atmosphere it's somewhere between fin-de-siècle and Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* stories: lush, ripe and decaying, full of ruthless but well-dressed characters. Crucially, though, de Bodard wants to unpick this society, not wallow in it, and she sets up clever parallels between the Fallen's domination of Paris and the colonialism in Africa and Indochina that underwrites the city's wealth.

Some aspects of the book are better realised than others: the overwhelming concentration on the Houses may be deliberately claustrophobic, but it leaves the rest of Paris in the shadows, for the most part. The mystery also lacks a little urgency because the people under threat aren't the most likeable bunch. But overall this is smart and nuanced storytelling. **Nic Clarke**

i De Bodard's award-winning short story "Immersion" is available to read online for free: bit.ly/alicedebodard.



A BETTER WAY TO DIE

A Cornell-copia of delights



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

312 pages | Paperback/Ebook/

Hardback

► Author Paul Cornell

► Publisher Newcon Press

❖ **Though it sounds like a** Bond film that never was, Paul Cornell's debut short story collection takes its name from the last of four tales featuring Jonathan Hamilton. Like Flashman crossed with Jerry Cornelius, the dapper English spy is designed as a less chauvinistic 007, although the likes of the compelling "One Of Our Bastards Is Missing" place more emphasis on Moorcock-esque multiversal political intrigue than exploration of gender politics.

Cornelius himself is the focus of "Global Collider Generation: An Idyll", which melds alternate Cold War history with particle physics. Moorcock's influence can also be detected in "The Deerstalkers", which cunningly weaves Lee Harvey Oswald into Sherlock Holmes's meta-fictional reality.

Elsewhere, "Ramesses On The Frontier" breathes new life into the mummy genre, while the charming "The Sensible Folly" somehow makes you sympathise with a building. But not everything is uplifting: "The Ghosts Of Christmas" is an unseasonably sombre warning about the perils of time travel. An engrossing anthology, which reflects the author's great versatility. **Stephen Jewell**

i The limited edition hardback includes two extra stories. Also out soon: Cornell ebook *Witches Of Lychford*.

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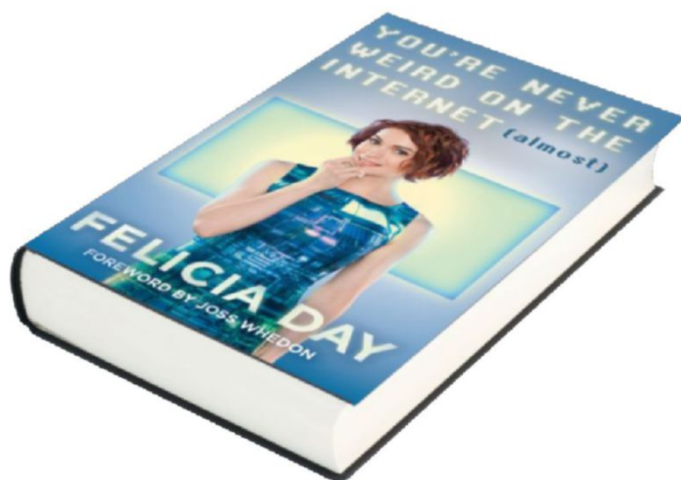
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YOU'RE NEVER WEIRD ON THE INTERNET (ALMOST)

The Guild's geek gal gabs



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

272 pages | Hardback/Ebook

► Author Felicia Day

► Publisher Sphere

“I was raised incredibly weird, but one day I accidentally got brave and thought I had a unique point of view about gaming.” This is how Felicia Day sums up her career, and she’s not wrong. “Weird” is definitely the word for her life, both past and present, and once you’ve read this memoir you’ll understand a hell of a lot more about this “Queen of the Geeks”, most notably her infamous, self-deprecating style of humour.

She had a bizarre childhood: home-schooled, she was a maths geek and violin prodigy whose dad worked in the military and whose mum was a hippie. She was once so addicted to *World Of Warcraft* that she wouldn’t leave the house. It’s both unsurprising and ironic, then, that she’d go on to invent *The Guild*, the web-series about a bunch of misfit gamers that made

her one of the most popular voices in gaming today – and one of the most hated, as she explores in a gut-wrenchingly horrifying chapter on the GamerGate debacle.

As a book, *You’re Never Weird...* is just as bizarre as Day’s life. It’s tough to engage with at first, as she regularly uses CAPS LOCK and Photoshopped images to illustrate what seem like elongated blog entries – annoying until you get used to it, and a little irritating even after you are. She writes just as she speaks – breathlessly – which is exhausting after a while; rest periods are advised. She also fails to go into any depth about her acting work, so *Buffy/Dr Horrible/Eureka/Supernatural* fans may come away disappointed.

However, the sheer oddness of Day’s career, as well as her charm, do make this a worthwhile read. And as Joss Whedon says in his introduction: “She’s damn funny.”

Jayne Nelson

i After GamerGaters posted her address online, Day shot scenes of murdering someone. She says it was “cathartic”.



THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SMUG

Beyond Good And Evil



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

344 pages | Paperback/Ebook

► Author Tom Holt

► Publisher Orbit Books

“The Orcs in Peter Jackson’s Middle-earth films are actually *real* Orcs, dumped into our world through a multidimensional doughnut and forced to earn a crust as film extras. This is one of many good ideas which keep you reading Holt’s disjointed-seeming novel – though if you’ve read Holt before you’ll trust it comes together in the end; and indeed it does.

The main story takes place in a mock-Tolkien world, where a goblin king teams up with an angry Elven newspaper columnist. They’re investigating economic upsets in their world, which might be linked to a little man who spins straw into gold. There’s a Dark Lord and a human banker, and the book asks who’s really the worst as it questions the black-and-white moralities of both Tolkienesque fantasy and the *Daily Mail*.

For all the elegant arguments, the lack of much real-world darkness undercuts some of Holt’s case. It also takes a while to warm up to the characters, though the ill-matched goblin/elf couple become fun, and there’s a splendid double-act of a harmless-looking man and boy who are both funny and frightening. More of them, please. **Andrew Osmond**

i Under his other identity of KJ Parker, Holt is currently releasing a monthly serial novel, *The Two Of Swords*.



THE DEAD HOUSE

Two’s company...



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

320 pages | Paperback

► Author Dawn Kurtagich

► Publisher Orion

“There are few more frightening real-world conditions than multiple personality disorder. But for Carly, the protagonist of Dawn Kurtagich’s debut novel, it’s a blessing not a curse. She’s happy to share the world with her “sister” personality, Kaitlyn. One takes the day, the other the night and all seems well. But are they alone in there?

We always know where this psychological horror will end: in death and fire. It’s told through a variety of sources: diary extracts, newspaper articles and police reports. That’s both a strength and a weakness; it gives the book some of its pace, and a strong sense of looming disaster. But it’s also a little repetitive – there’s only so many times you can read Kaitlyn wail, “but I am real!” to her doctor. And after a few pages you’ll be wishing that someone had disabled the strikethrough function on Kurtagich’s copy of *MS Word*.

That said, this is a promising debut. The characterisation is nuanced and empathic; Carly/Kaitlyn is more sympathetic than scary, and you’re always rooting for her. The supernatural elements are low key, but effectively used, and there are some properly shivery moments that should spook the YA audience it’s aimed at. **Will Salmon**

i The book was inspired by a bout of sleep inversion that made the author sleep by day and be awake at night.

Reviews



THE BLACK LOTUS

Teenage mutant ninja humans



▶ **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

313 pages | Paperback/Ebook

▶ Author Kieran Fanning

▶ Publisher Chicken House

❖ **There's something to be** said for giving your audience what they want, and Kieran Fanning's debut – aimed at eight to 12-year-olds – piles on the giddy, crowd-pleasing thrills like presents under a Christmas tree.

In this first of the *Samurai Wars* series, three teens with special powers are recruited to join an army of elite ninjas sworn to overthrow the totalitarian Japanese Empire under whose yoke the world has fallen. Along the way, there are secret underground bases, invisibility suits, time travel, magic swords, Bond-style gadgets (lethal Sellotape, anyone?), a whole load of kick-ass fighting and even a Disney-style talking mouse for added cutes.

Crossing continents and centuries, the book moves with the urgency and momentum of an action movie – indeed, you can't help but wonder if the epic, Manhattan-trashing final showdown wasn't written with one eye on a movie deal.

That's not to say it's without heart, though: you'll root for this gutsy trio and, like any children's book worth its salt, it's really a story about friendship, loyalty and bravery. Plus it's also about super-powered ninjas; kids will eat it up. **Paul Kirkley**

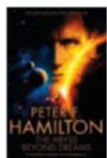
i According to the book, Harry Houdini, Charlie Chaplin and Salvador Dali were all Black Lotus superninjas too.

REISSUES

This month's biggest paperback is Stephen King's **REVIVAL** (★★★★★, 10 September, Hodder).



Another decades-spanning fictional biography, it centres on a rock guitarist, weaving in the tale of an electricity-obsessed ex-Reverend who creates a healing ministry. We said: "The characters are great, and the pacing and plotting more economical than many recent King novels... but the sudden gear change to cosmic, apocalyptic gothdom at the finale feels like a cheap, gaudy parlour trick." The first of two volumes that'll complete Peter F Hamilton's **Commonwealth** saga, **THE ABYSS BEYOND DREAMS** (★★★★★, 27 August, Tor)



features the Void, a mysterious object resembling a massive black hole located at the centre of the Milky Way, and some visceral horror – including alien eggs that absorb human bodies, *Body Snatchers*-style. Our verdict: "hugely enjoyable... Hamilton's so good at maintaining forward momentum even as he shifts perspectives or throws in an unexpected twist." Fantasy author Steven Erikson's latest sees him having a stab at SF: **WILLFUL CHILD** (★★★★★, 27 August, Bantam) is a



Star Trek spoof, featuring characters like a sword-wielding officer called Zulu. Sadly, our reviewer wasn't impressed: "Erikson is no Douglas Adams... If *Willful Child* was fanfic found in the nether regions of self-publishing you'd be reasonably amused. But from a major author it feels a little embarrassing."

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ZEROES *by Scott Westerfeld with Margo Lanagan and Deborah Biancotti*

A gripping new sci-fi adventure from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Afterworlds*.

The Zeroes are six teens with new kinds of superpowers. Their abilities make them anything but heroes – until a high stakes crisis changes everything.

CHAPTER 1

"MORE COFFEE?"

Ethan jumped. It'd been a long night. "Okay."

The waitress wasn't even listening, the coffee pot dipping toward Ethan's cup. Which was fine. The coffee was crap and he was already wired, but it gave him an excuse to keep sitting there.

He'd spent the last two hours hunched in a back booth of the Moonstruck Diner, staring out the window at the Cambria Central Bank. It was right across the street, and it opened at eight.

"Want anything else?" the waitress asked.

"I'm good. Thanks."

He drank some more coffee. Still crap.

At least the bitter java gave him a reason to seem jumpy.

Nobody would look at him and say, "Hey, that kid is real jumpy. Must have something to do with the army-green duffel bag under his feet."

Nope. Nobody would blame the bag.

He glanced around the diner. Everyone was wrapped up in their own six a.m. thoughts.

Nobody was even looking at him. Okay, one girl

was looking at him. But she glanced away like she'd been caught staring. So apart from that one cute girl at the front of the diner, nobody was looking at him.

Besides, this was the middle of Main Street. Nobody would come rolling in to seize Ethan and his bag and haul them both out into the dawn. Nothing bad ever happened here in Cambria, California, population half a million during a college term.

The diner was filling up with delivery guys on breaks, respectable citizens in suits, and the occasional group of clubbers winding down. All Ethan had to do was watch the bank and wait for the doors to open.

Easy. As long as the waiting didn't kill him.

"More coffee?"

"Seriously, it's been five minutes. Can you stop with the coffee?"

The waitress looked stung.

"Sorry," Ethan said. But she was already gone.

He pulled the duffel bag up and wedged it into a corner of the booth like a makeshift pillow. Which was pretty funny, given what was in the bag. It was the stuff in the bag that was keeping him awake. That, and the people looking for it.

He'd always known the voice would do this one day – get him into serious trouble. The voice didn't care about consequences. The voice didn't weigh up the pros and cons and then say, "Hey, Ethan, this is how you can get what you want." The voice wasn't sentient like that; it wasn't smart. It didn't negotiate. The voice just went for it. It lied and lied, and most of the time Ethan didn't even know where the

The Author



→ Scott Westerfeld is the author of books for adults and for teens, including the global bestselling YA series *Uglies*, and the *New York Times* bestseller *Afterworlds*. Scott divides his time between Sydney and New York. www.scottwesterfeld.com.

lies came from when they poured out of his mouth. How did the voice know half that stuff?

But Ethan had always known that one day he'd pay for all those lies.

Right now he was hoping today was not that day.

CHAPTER 2

THE EVENING BEFORE HAD STARTED WELL.

A date with a beautiful woman, a premed student from the north side. Ethan put on his best shirt, a pin-striped button-up his sister had bought him last year, promising it would drive girls crazy.

The premed girl was way out of his league, even with the shirt, but the voice had talked her into it. He could see her trying to understand it herself. She was at least four years older than him, way more sophisticated and

much hotter. But every time she seemed uncertain, Ethan would draw her back in.

Or, rather, the voice would.

It would say just the right thing about the midnight art-house film they'd seen, or the obscure premed stuff she was into, or Ethan's plan to study at the Sorbonne one day. Whatever the hell the Sorbonne was.

But then it got late and exhausting and frankly kind of expensive. He'd used up all his cash buying movie tickets and caramel popcorn and drinks from a wine bar so divey that Indira had called it "quaint." The wine was fifteen bucks a glass. Ethan didn't even like wine.

If it'd been up to him, he would have scammed his way through the night. The voice was great at getting stuff for free. But Indira clung to Ethan's side, watching his every move

like he was some exotic breed she'd never seen before. A teenage kid from the wrong side of town. She probably thought he was quaint too, in a divey way.

It was pretty clear that the voice could never convince Indira to do anything more than talk and smile and cling. A nice girl from the north side, she probably wouldn't even make out on a first date.

So the voice switched itself to mute while Ethan worked out what he wanted to do next. When he decided all he wanted was to go home, the voice sorted that out too.

He left Indira standing by her car in front of the art-house cinema. She seemed to glow, lit by the marquee lights announcing a lineup of classic films. Her long summer dress billowed in the night sea breeze. She looked confused by his sudden departure. Maybe a little hurt.

"This blows," Ethan muttered to himself. In his real voice.

He hated how sad she looked. But he didn't have the energy to turn around. It was all the fault of that stupid art-house film. Who knew it could be that boring? Watching it had sucked the life out of him.

As Ethan walked away, he rubbed his jaw with the palms of both hands. His muscles always felt weird after a long night of letting the voice talk for him. Like he'd been speaking a foreign language. It left a taste in his mouth too. Oily charm with notes of bullshit.

The worst part was, he had no way home. He was totally out of cash, so a cab was out of the question, and buses didn't run this late. Indira would've given him a ride, but of course the voice had spun some crap about his vintage Jaguar parked a few streets away, just to get rid of her.

The voice sucked at planning ahead. The voice just knew when Ethan wanted out.

It also liked to twist the knife sometimes. It had claimed the Jaguar was a present from his dad. Yeah, right.

Luckily, it was summer and Cambria's nightclub strip was still in full swing. There were plenty of people to hitch a ride with on Ivy Street. Ethan followed the thudding drumbeat until he reached the crowd. Light spilled from canopied doorways, and people shouted at each other, deafened by music that rebounded from the pavement and warehouse walls.

The voice could talk Ethan's way into one of the clubs. But once inside, no one would hear him over the music. He'd be just another gawky seventeen-year-old with a mousy buzz cut and too many freckles.

No, what he needed was somebody

here outside.

A muddle of tribes skirted each other on Ivy. Hipsters and scene kids, crumpled coked-up suits from the stripper bar, a few raver wannabes in summer outfits showing lots of skin. They were mostly older than Ethan, which meant they mostly had cars. Somebody could be talked into giving him a lift home.

Just ahead of him, a guy exited one of the clubs from a side door. Which probably meant he was staff and sober enough to drive.

Ethan sped up.

The guy walked with a steady purpose. He had an army-green duffel bag over one shoulder. Ethan let himself drift into the guy's way until the bag slapped against him.

"Hey, watch it!" he said in his own voice.

The guy spun to face him. He was a few inches shorter than Ethan, but twice as big across the shoulders. And he had no neck. The sort of guy who could crush you with an annoyed glare. His right hand dropped into a jacket pocket, like he was ready to pull a knife.

"Whoa." Ethan backed away. "My mistake. Sorry about that."

The guy scanned Ethan. His eyes were piercing, way too blue. Almost electric. But a moment later he smiled, eased his hand out of his pocket, and gripped Ethan's shoulder. It was like being held up by a wall.

"Sorry, man," the guy said. His voice was calm and low. "Did I hit you?"

"No problem. You missed, actually," Ethan

“Ethan had always known that one day he'd pay for all those lies”

sputtered, fear beating in his chest. All he wanted was to be on the same side as this guy in his next fight. He let the voice take over. "Taylor sent me over to help you out."

That was one of the voice's specialties. Names.

The big guy paused, looking him up and down. Not smiling anymore.

"Taylor sent you?" An edge of disbelief in the low rumble of his voice. "How's a squirt like you gonna help?"

Ethan hated when this happened. The voice would get him into situations that only the voice could get him out of. Then he was stuck, listening and waiting. Letting it talk.

"Taylor said you were bad off last night. Wasn't sure you'd remember the way to his house." The voice sounded like it was making a joke, so Ethan tried to smile.

The guy stared at him another moment, then laughed. Abruptly, like that was the stupidest thing he'd ever heard. "What a dickhead. I worked off that hangover in the gym this morning. How do you know Taylor?"

"My sister's in his old army unit," Ethan heard himself say, and cringed.

Thing was, his sister really was in the army. Stuff could go really wrong when the voice told the truth. What if the guy asked for his sister's name? What would the voice say then?

But the guy relaxed, like he understood everything now. "So you're family. Taylor wants you to join the team."

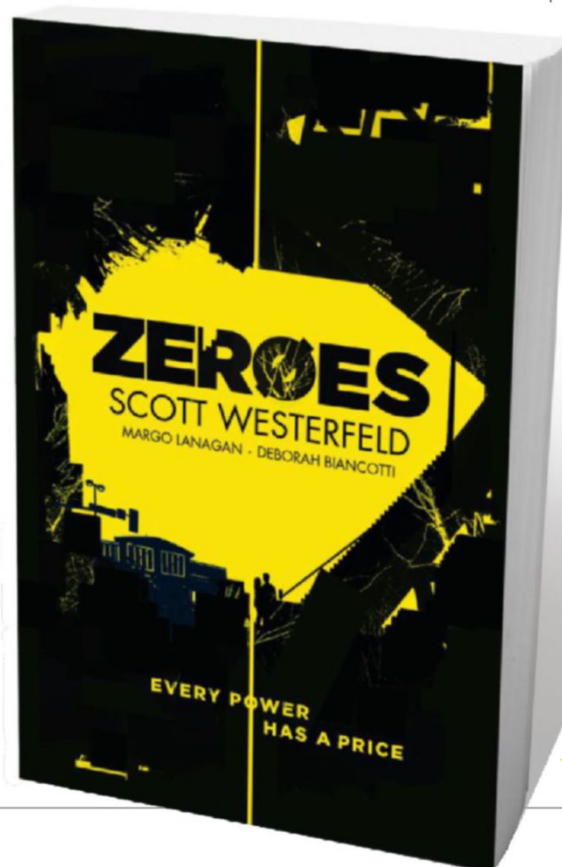
Ethan nodded, because it seemed like the right thing to do. "He said I should learn from the best." The voice twisted his throat, like it was imitating someone. "Nobody better than the Craig."

A low thunder of laughter spilled out of the Craig, who reached over and took Ethan's shoulder again. The weight of his hand almost buckled Ethan's knees.

"He tell you to say that? What a dickhead." He shoved Ethan, sending him stumbling a few steps backward. "Come on. Car's this way."

The Craig headed for a side street. Ethan took a breath and followed.

Hell, maybe he could still get a ride home out of this. ●



To find out what happens next, pick up *Zeroes* from 24 September at all good bookshops. It's also available digitally.

INJECTION

Myth and madness



★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **Image Comics**

► Writer **Warren Ellis**

► Artist **Declan Shalvey**

ISSUES 1-3 Nobody else pulls off grumpiness quite like Warren Ellis. One of the most acclaimed comics writers around (thanks to epic works like *Transmetropolitan* and *Planetary*), his most memorable characters are frequently angry and foul-mouthed with an expert line in pitch-black wit. Now, with his latest creator-owned title from Image Comics, Ellis has given us some new examples of expertly-written surliness as a group of broken scientists and specialists take on the mythological history of Britain.

The new series also sees Ellis reuniting with artist Declan

Shalvey and colourist Jordie Bellaire – with whom he first teamed on Marvel's highly acclaimed relaunch of *Moon Knight* – for a story that plays like a bleak *X-Files* episode rewritten by *Quatermass* creator Nigel Kneale.

Injection is set in the near future, a few years after five members of an organisation called the Cross-Cultural Contamination Unit were responsible for an event that broke the world. Known as “The Injection”, the event altered reality itself, and after several years of increasingly strange after-effects, a bizarre and surreal disappearance at a corporate laboratory draws the members of the “3CU” back together again.

Featuring everything from otherworldly entities and talking corpses to a spectacular and gory

fight sequence, these first three issues build a sense of brooding menace and introduce some fascinating characters, while also delving deep into hard science and English mythology. The mix of spriggans, “cunning men” and brain-bending science fiction is entertaining, intriguing as hell, and made even more powerful by Shalvey and Bellaire's sharp, moody visuals.

Taking a different approach from that shown in *Moon Knight*, Shalvey goes from characterful dialogue sequences to moments of surreal horror with tremendous style, while Bellaire once again proves why she's one of the best colourists around by giving the

“The first three issues build a sense of brooding menace”

book a strong atmosphere and a real sense of place. The lettering from Fonografiks is a well-executed part of the package, too, contributing to a mystery that's gripping and mind-expanding in equal measure.

As with Ellis's other ongoing series for Image, *Trees*, *Injection* is a slow-burning story that takes its time revealing its secrets, but it's also turning out to be a moodier, more compulsive comic-book thriller. A sharply crafted, darkly intelligent tale of mad science and broken history, *Injection* is so far looking to be a prime example of a superlative creative team working at the very top of their game.

Saxon Bullock

i Ellis's next work for Marvel will be *Karnak*, a new series with artist Gerardo Zaffino, arriving in October 2015.



Pretty in pink.

CMYK

Colour me amazed

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **Vertigo**

► Editor **Scott Nybakken**

► Writers/artists **Various**

GRAPHIC NOVEL DC's “mature readers” imprint Vertigo has released a number of themed anthologies over recent years, but the *CMYK* series is something very different. Four quarterly anthologies now collected into one edition, the tales in *CMYK* aren't linked by a genre or an idea – instead, they're linked by the four colours that are usually used in colour printing (with each original issue focusing on Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and the “Key” colour Black).

The result is a visually gorgeous collection that mixes together fantasy, SF, horror and non-genre stories into a wild and unpredictable blend. Featuring creators like Jeff Lemire and Bill Sienkiewicz alongside lesser known writers and artists, *CMYK* is an interesting if mixed bunch of stories that's at its best when it forgets traditional storytelling and gets more experimental.

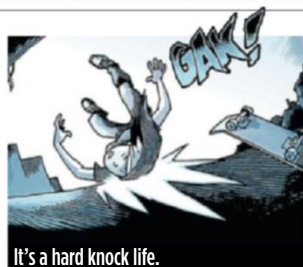
Highlights include the crazy page layouts of “Much Ado About Nothing”, the touching indie-comic romance of “Gem Pockets” and the stunning dream quest narrative of “End Of Line”. Each of the colour themes are used in a variety of creative ways throughout, and while not every tale hits home, this is still a fascinating and often rewarding anthology.

Saxon Bullock

i This year's quarterly anthology from Vertigo is the sound effects-themed *SFX*. Hey, nice title!



Gardening is such a relaxing hobby.



It's a hard knock life.

ISLAND

Monthly mixture

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **Image Comics**

► Creators **Brandon Graham**

and **Emma Rios**

► Writers/artists **Various**

ISSUE 1 Independent outfit

Image has looked increasingly like a mainstream publisher in recent years, with superhero comics and blockbuster concepts filling shelves. There's nothing wrong with that – it'd be churlish to criticise a company who put out *Starlight*, *The Fade Out* and *Deadly Class* in the same year – but it's great to see them releasing *Island*, which is as indie as indie gets.

Looking more like a student zine than a traditional comic, *Island* collects five stories (some one-offs, some continuing), most of which are recognisable panel/picture narratives, with one exception: Kelly Sue DeConnick's beautiful prose tribute to a lost friend, "Railbirds".

Island isn't perfect. It's a tough ask to drop readers into a story established elsewhere, and while fantasy adventure "Multiple Warheads 2: Ghosttown" might look great, it's fairly impenetrable. "Dagger Proof Mummy" is weak for the opposite reason – the dialogue is simplistic and clichéd. Luckily, "Polaris 1" tips the balance: it's a fascinating exploration of comic-book creativity. And creativity is the element that'll make us return to this *Island*.

Sam Ashurst

i Graham came up with the concept/title based on the premise "What comics would you take to an island?"



SPACE DUMPLINS

A rich stew of ideas

★★★★★

► **RELEASED 3 SEPTEMBER**

► Publisher **Faber & Faber**

► Writer/Artist **Craig Thompson**

GRAPHIC NOVEL We could make an

argument about how, in an era of multiplatform franchises and superhero comics aimed at over-35s, we need to support publishers and creators who remain committed to original comics for (and about) kids. But such an argument is unnecessary when work as utterly brilliant as *Space Dumplings* is emerging.

Young Violet Marlocke lives in a trailer park in space. When her school is destroyed in a space whale attack, her mother's forced to bring her to work – but it's when her father goes missing on a mysterious "special mission"

“Thompson keeps his art bright, rich and colourful”

that Violet's real adventure begins as, frustrated by the authorities' secretive and apathetic attitude, she sets out to find her dad. It's a bit like *The Ballad Of Halo Jones* if it had been written by Dr Seuss on a steady diet of *The Ren And Stimpy Show*.

The world of *Space Dumplings* is brilliantly drawn by Craig Thompson (in both senses): there are no planets, it's all set on space stations and asteroids, and its society has become ever more segregated into the haves and the have-nots. Violet is a lovely character, appealing and yet quite normal, acting as an anchor amongst the more outlandish elements (Elliot, an intelligent rooster who "identifies more as a chicken" and locates vintage buttons for a living, is particularly wonderful).

Despite the grim edges, Thompson keeps his art bright, rich and colourful, and doesn't slip into cynical dystopia. The result is a bold, adventurous space fantasy that's perfect for kids – or anyone.

Eddie Robson

i One reference for a panel of space landfill was a sculpture made from plane parts in LA's Museum of Contemporary Art.



'Snow fun outside.

ARCADIA

Matrix Devolutions

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Publisher **Boom! Studios**

► Writer **Alex Paknadel**

► Artist **Eric Scott Pfeiffer**

ISSUES 1-4 Set in a post-

apocalyptic world where most of humanity has been uploaded to the titular vast, computer-generated simulation after a devastating pandemic, *Arcadia* inevitably evokes comparisons with *The Matrix*.

Unlike in the Wachowskis' trilogy, however, the inhabitants are all too aware of their artificial existence. Frequently cutting between virtual locations and "The Meat" – an Alaskan storage facility home to *Arcadia*'s servers – writer Alex Paknadel posits some intriguing political arguments, as a dispute breaks out about the impact *Arcadia* is having on the real world's energy resources.

Halfway through its initial eight-issue run, some pieces of the compelling central scenario finally fall into place, but a little less exposition would make for smoother reading. And while lead character Lee Pepper being the only living person with a counterpart in *Arcadia* is an interesting slant on a well-worn scenario, other elements, such as the emergence of a rebel faction, are overly familiar.

Still, though the story moves slowly, Eric Scott Pfeiffer's kinetic, Paul Pope-esque art draws you in immediately. A promising series that will hopefully follow less predictable paths in future. **Stephen Jewell**

i Paknadel says his biggest influence was documentary series *All Watched Over By Machines Of Loving Grace*.

GAME OF THRONES

A Nest Of Vipers

Throne survivor

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on Xbox One

► Also on PS4, PC, PS3, Xbox 360, mobile

► Publisher Telltale Games

VIDEOGAME Five episodes into

Telltale's six-part videogamification of the rampantly violent fantasy drama, and we're finally at the point we've been hoping for. Big stuff is happening, previous choices come back to bite you in the behind, and your decisions (one in particular) at last feel like they actually carry some weight. This is all very welcome indeed, given that if this were a series of the TV show, it would likely be season five: meandering and a tad lacklustre, leading up to an absolute gutpunch of a conclusion.

Events follow pretty much straight on from *Sons Of Winter*. Gared is still flailing about in the freezing northern wilderness but despite some pleasingly desperate combat, his is easily the weakest

plotline – not least because he now seems barely connected to this already tangential dynasty. King's Landing handmaiden Mira, having lost the support of the social-climbing Sara following that scene at the banquet, enters a devious battle of diplomacy with Machiavellian, gossip-hungry queen regent Cersei.

Having helped Daenerys liberate the city of Meereen – and oddly, having been given the opportunity to awkwardly flirt with her – black sheep Asher is still trying to raise an army to fight for his family via the fighting pits, where his bids to impress the freed slaves are among the episode's most tense and frenetic action beats.

Ultimately though, it's back at Ironrath with poor old Rodrik that your sympathies really lie, given the emotional rollercoaster he's on. He's immediately plunged into an especially nasty confrontation with Ramsay Bolton and ends up presented with the toughest decision of the series thus far. All

“We're not entirely sure how Telltale is going to tie it all up”

that and shattered legs? Poor fella.

We're not entirely sure how Telltale is going to tie it all up; it seems like a little too much time has been spent getting us to this point, leaving the exciting stuff bunched up at the end. It's a shame that it took this long for the game's momentum to pick up. The technical glitches and misjudged art style remain as definite niggles, but we can't wait for the conclusion now – bring on the battles and the heartstring-yanking. **Emma Davies**

i Mira is from the Forrester family, only mentioned once in the novels, so Telltale can tell her story without disrupting canon.



DOCTOR WHO: THE FATE OF KRELOS

Trouble in the TARDIS

★★★★★

► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

50 minutes | CD/Download

► Publisher Big Finish

AUDIO CD Big Finish's *Doctor*

Who releases have often been at their strongest when expanding the possibilities of what *Who* storytelling can get away with. This month, the pick of their output is this first in a two-part finale to the latest season of Fourth Doctor adventures.

What's most appealing about it is the way it initially undercuts expectation to a massive degree. Instead of opening with an epic sense of threat, this first instalment begins as a quiet, elliptical and small-scale character drama. The plot follows the Doctor (Tom Baker) and Leela (Louise Jameson), as a holiday trip to the beautiful planet Krelos turns into an unexpected glimpse of an apocalyptic event – but they don't realise that the real threat is lurking inside the TARDIS itself...

Nicholas Briggs's script builds effective menace and shows how well the Big Finish stories have expanded the Doctor and Leela's relationship, while also giving Baker and Jameson a chance to show how effective they can be. There's still a chance the story may go off-course in its final episode, but so far this latest two-parter is a brilliant and thrilling mix of the enjoyable and the unexpected. **Saxon Bullock**

i The Fourth Doctor heads to an old foe's home planet in season finale "Return To Telos".



THE OMEGA FACTOR Series One

Spooky '70s show gets spiritual successor



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

282 minutes | CD/Download

► Publisher **Big Finish**

AUDIO CD Of all the series resurrected for audio by Big Finish, *The Omega Factor* is surely the most esoteric. This occult thriller ran for a single season in 1979 before coming under fire from Mary Whitehouse, who referred to it as “thoroughly evil”. The series has more-or-less languished in obscurity ever since. This audio revival moves the action to the present day and brings back Louise Jameson as Dr Anne Reynolds of Department 7, a government bureau dedicated to researching hauntings, telekinesis and other paranormal phenomena. Her partner, psychic Tom Crane, has departed, but an encounter with his equally gifted

son Adam (John Dorney) sparks off new investigations.

“From Beyond” establishes that the intervening years haven’t been kind to Anne. She’s more or less

lost everything, and the future of the Department is in question. The B-plot about a woman trying to contact her dead brother is a little thin, but it’s a solid opening.



A tragic condition means they can never look in the same direction.

More fun is Phil Mulryne’s “The Old Gods”, which strides firmly into *Wicker Man* territory, with a sinister cult stirring up trouble in the Cairngorms. It’s as clichéd as they come, but we learn more about Adam’s abilities.

Cavan Scott’s “Legion” is one for hardcore fans, as Natasha Gerson’s psychic Morag (a recurring character in the TV series) returns. It’s the only episode where a knowledge of the original is helpful, but Scott does a skilful job of making it comprehensible to newbies.

Finally, Ken Bentley’s “The Hollow Earth” is a claustrophobic story about homeless people disappearing near a church. Its setting and sort-of real-time storytelling recall recent horror *The Borderlands*, and some nerve-shredding sound design makes for an uncomfortable listen. It’s a low-key end to a set that updates the series, but keeps the (evil) spirit of the original intact. **Will Salmon**

i Natasha Gerson was the daughter of show creator Jack Gerson, and auditioned under a pseudonym to avoid claims of nepotism.

GODZILLA

Monstrously slow



► **RELEASED OUT NOW!**

► Reviewed on **PS4**

► Publisher **Bandai Namco**

VIDEOGAME You know those clumsy Japanese robots from car manufacturers who are always tripping down stairs and ill-advisedly playing football? Imagine two clad in Halloween costumes, trying to dance. That’s what awkward urban beat-’em-up *Godzilla* is like.

Completing campaign mode God Of Destruction multiple times is how you unlock the game’s dozen-or-so kaiju and their uncoordinated scraps. To begin with, Godzilla stumbles into ’50s Tokyo, eats nuclear waste, then vanishes. Sixty years later – the modern day – he’s back to devour the new technology Japan has innovated in his absence,

G-Energy. To do this he – AKA you – must thrash against power generators until they explode, while G-Force militia in tanks and choppers provide all the threat of light rain. Kaiju offer a bit more bite, emerging from the sea halfway through each five-minute stage for, well, no reason whatsoever. The serious lack of moves is depressing – there’s no blocking, dodging, or evading – and most fights involve the sluggish, over-hefty combatants slowly flailing at each other until one mercifully falls over. Not

“The serious lack of moves is depressing”



“Don’t make me shine lights at you!”

exactly a mechanised power fantasy come to life.

The strange assortment of playable characters is the best bit. There are multiple Godzilla variations, including the levitating Space Godzilla, and Mechagodzilla with his projectile hands. Then there’s giant moth Mothra, the armadillo-like Anguirus, and the mighty King Ghidorah. Once you’ve exhausted their movesets, though, the appeal dries up.

Outside of God Of Destruction mode, King Of The Monsters is nothing more than six stages of kaiju to fight, and the one-on-one Vs mode would have been appealing, were it not restricted to online play only. As a result – much like those sad Japanese robots – *Godzilla* falls flat on its face. **Ben Griffin**

i You might find a bit more fun in the Diorama mode, which allows you to photograph monsters doing silly poses.



COLLECTABLES

What we've been playing with this month

1 Assembled together, the constituents of this **Game Of Thrones Stacking Mug Set** (FPI price £13.99; product code C8253) form a complete map of Westeros, with a partial map of Essos on the back. Each is but a thimble compared to the gargantuan caffeine containers we use to power us through the day at *SFX* Towers,

however, so you might want to keep all three to yourself rather than share them around.

2 Doctors Four, Eleven and Twelve have been immortalised by Funko before, but the latest **Doctor Who Pop! Vinyl Figures** (FPI price £10.99 each; product codes D1851, D1852, D1854) tweak the designs

with accessories. So, Tom Baker's Time Lord has a palmful of jelly babies (and the grey coat he wore from time to time); Matt Smith's is kitted out with a mop and fez from "The Big Bang"; and Capaldi's is brandishing the spoon he used to fight Robin Hood. All three are immensely cute, as long as you don't dwell upon their dead, staring black-hole eyes. Eek.

3 When you play the Game of Thrones you win or you die. Sign up as a sworn brother of the Night's Watch, however, and an icy demise is guaranteed. On the plus side, the watchers on the wall do get boss coats and a nifty oath to recite, which is emblazoned on this **Night's Watch Oath Tankard** (FPI price £12.99; product code C6213). Perfect for your frosty trifle of choice, it's a hefty glass receptacle – one that could easily fend off a Wildling attack.

4 It appears the world's reserves of potato-related puns have finally been exhausted, as this **Ant-Man Mr Potato Head** (FPI price £16.99;

All products are available at

forbiddenplanet
international
home shopping

www.forbiddenplanet.co.uk
01621 877 222

Reviews



product code C7489) joins the ranks of Darth Tater (good work) and Spider Spud (must try harder). You can remove the Marvel hero's facial features, torso, arms and legs, reducing him to a pile of six segments – but where's the fun in pulling his fizzog off when it all comes off in one lump, eh? Vision and Daredevil Potato Heads are due later in the year.

5 Holy brand disconnect! It's hard to imagine a less appropriate product in the Dark Knight's crimefighting arsenal than this **Batman Hipflask** (FPI price £7.99; product code C7387). As concerned citizens, we shudder at the thought of Gotham's finest taking

a cheeky nip of 100 proof Scotch before walloping the Joker up the punchline. Let's pretend the old soak stores a handy six ounces of shark-repellent Bat-Spray in its stainless steel confines.

6 These **Dorbz Guardians Of The Galaxy Vinyl Figures** (FPI price £8.99 each; product codes C8689, C8686, C8675, C8698, C8695) are over-simplified to the point of laziness. Yes, you can tell this bunch of A-holes apart in a line-up, but that owes more to the fact they're green or blue or, er, a raccoon than any subtlety to the designs. A *Reservoir Dogs* range isn't going to work, is it? We've rounded up Nebula, Ronan,

Star-Lord, Gamora and Rocket here. Also available: Drax, Groot, Korath, Yondu, the Collector, a mask-less Star Lord, and a Nova-suited Rocket.

7 Need some incentive to save the pennies? Behold the crepuscular, stygian and frankly eldritch horror of the **Cthulhu Bank** (FPI price £17.99; product code C5070). Fashioned in creepy green vinyl from the perspiring imagination of horror master HP Lovecraft, this ancient, unknowable, quasi-octopoid deity from the nameless depths will perch beside you demanding payment in its foul, infernal slot. Did we say pennies? Maybe we meant to say... your soul! ●

THINGS TO COME

More goodies on their way soon



ETA
OCTOBER
EXPECT TO PAY
£20

XENOMORPH EGG SET

◆ Startle away fridge-raiding freeloaders with this cardboard egg box loaded with six Xenomorph eggs – three of which contain the fizzog-gripping horrors. Produced by NECA, they're in scale with their line of *Alien* 7" figures.



ETA
NOVEMBER
EXPECT TO PAY
£29

SONIC SCREWDRIVER BBQ TONGS

◆ What will they think of next...? Most of this is actually a "storage case", which lifts off to reveal the tongs below. Pop in AA batteries and you can give your burgers a quick blast of the appropriate sonic sound effect.



ETA
DECEMBER
EXPECT TO PAY
£9 EACH

BACK TO THE FUTURE TUMBLERS

◆ There are three of these snazzy glasses, one for each of the films. Each features artwork of a key scene: Doc Brown connecting the power cords; the DeLorean cruising through the air; and the arrival of the Time Train.

ZERO WORLD *by Jason M. Hough*

An immersive and thrilling sci-fi action rampage from the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Darwin Elevator*.

When the crew of the *Venturi* is found dead, cybernetically enhanced assassin Peter Caswell joins a salvage crew to track down the spacecraft's missing scientist.

“Captain?” one of the crew said. Douglas, it sounded like.

“Go ahead,” came Angelina’s reply. “Lander zero-one is missing.”

Silence. Caswell listened. He marked his audio recording minus ten seconds, just in case.

“Missing as in ripped away in the explosion?”

“Uh. Not sure. Zero-two is still here, looks intact.”

“Copy that. Keep me posted.”

The radio went silent. Caswell marked the exchange as interesting and sent it off to Monique, then returned his focus to the section of wall he’d just exposed. Within, neatly bundled cables in a variety of colors ran in every direction. In the center, a grid of gold indentations gleamed under the light from his headlamp. From another pocket on his torso he produced a small dark green plastic box with ridged edges. He powered the box on and waited a few seconds for the tiny LED on it to wink from red to a flashing green. Caswell flipped the device around and pressed it against the gold grid within the wall, then fetched the hovering panel.

He activated his private Archon channel. “Mo, the keg is tapped. You should be receiving data now. IA6, out.”

Around him, rows of white lights flickered on, so bright that his visor darkened to compensate. He switched back to the standard channel. “How’s it going in there, Captain?”

“Thought you were with us,” Angelina replied, her voice curt in his ear.

“Just, you know, soaking it in. Surreal to actually set foot in such a famous—”

“Get the hell up here, Doctor. We’re on a schedule.”

While she spoke he reinstalled the access panel. “Any... uh, any sign of the original crew?”

“Negative.”

“And the black box?”

“I’m staring at it right now. Which means I need you here, right now.”

“Sorry. On my way.”

His gaze went to the exercise compartment again, however, and that round hatch beyond adorned with medical signage. The sight tickled something in his mind. Memories just beyond reach.

A thought began to worm into his mind—the inevitable conclusion whenever something like this happened to him. Déjà vu, or an infuriatingly familiar face. His particular skill set, his augmentation, made all such phenomena candidates for something else entirely: the remnants of a reality forcibly removed.

He willed the thought away. Down that path lay madness. Ignorance, he reminded himself, was bliss.

The Author



→ Jason M. Hough was born in Illinois but grew up on the mean streets of suburban San Diego, California. In 1978, when he was six, his parents took him to see *Star Wars*, and so began a lifelong love of sci-fi and all things geek. He later worked for a decade in the videogame industry as a 3D artist and a game designer. Today he lives in Seattle with his wife and two young sons. When not writing, Hough enjoys building LEGO spaceships with his boys and other similarly grown-up pursuits.

Yet he couldn’t resist the pull. There was... something. Despite his better judgment he found himself floating in front of the round hatch marked med bay. He wheeled the lever to the open position and pulled. Something pushed against his suit. Air, rushing out. His visor fogged before sensors could compensate. Dry air hissed through fans in his helmet and then condensation retreated.

A monster rushed toward him, arms flung wide as if to grapple. Caswell’s heart lurched before his brain fully understood: A male corpse was moving on the current of air that had just been sucked from the room. Caswell shoved the hatch back just in time to feel the limp body flop against it and repel away.

With a deep breath he opened the door again, a few centimeters at a time.

Six bodies floated about within. They were remarkably well preserved, considering the room had still held air. Air, he realized, that would have been stagnant for twelve years.

None of the bodies looked like Alice Vale, so he slipped the hatch closed and sealed it again. If Monique needed to know cause of death he’d explore

further, but for the time being he felt no desire to mingle with the dead. He fired off another report to Archon. “Found the six crew you mentioned. They’re all in the medical bay – no comments on the irony there, all right? I only glanced but given the room still held air, I’m going to guess sudden and very rapid acceleration did them in.” Then he added, “No

sign of our missing seventh. Continuing my search.”

Caswell drifted into the C&C to find Angelina in the pilot’s chair, tapping away at a foldout computer. Klaus knelt beside an open panel at the far end, fiddling with some gear he’d hauled in.

The room had the basic size and shape of all mass-produced station compartments. Five meters on a side, fifteen long, studded with attach points to serve virtually any purpose.

“How’s it going?” he asked.

“Waiting for you,” Klaus replied.

“Computers are up, huh?” he asked, more reproach in his voice than he’d intended.

Angelina’s fingers paused for the briefest instant. “Nothing in the contract about not accessing them.”

“If you say so. Find anything interesting?”

“Just—”

An urgent override from Monique clipped the captain’s response. “*Agent IA6, this mission will continue under Integrity-Assured protocol. Sorry, Caswell, with the time delay there’s no chance to offer opt-in. This came from the very top.*”

His pulse swelled to a steady war drum on his temples.

Integrity-Assured protocol, or IA, meant nasty business lay ahead.

Monique went on. “*Time critical, I’m afraid. I’m sending the remote command to enable your implant in exactly twenty seconds.*”

Peter Caswell swore. His ritual may be impossible here, but she could at least wait for consent. She’d always given him that much. Time to be relaxed. Opted in. Having fucking agreed. Caswell glanced about, feeling the clock tick away like a time bomb. He did the only thing he could think to do and slipped his free hand and both feet into the nearest stabilizer handles on the Venturi’s wall.

Ten seconds.

What was so damn important that they couldn’t allow twenty minutes for him to opt in? Of course, Monique had answered that: time critical. If he were to decline it would take weeks to get someone else out here. By then the crippled station would have fallen into the Sun. He told himself not to worry. Monique had opted in, obviously. For him to be activated meant she had been, too. They were paired. Agent and handler, experts in

their respective roles, recruited and linked because their bodies happened to be the rare sort that wouldn’t reject the IA-class implant.

Caswell shut his eyes. He took two deep breaths and started to chant the lyric. He could do that much, at least. She couldn’t take that away.

This mental anchor had not been part of the training. He’d simply thought it wise to have something familiar on the tip of his tongue when he eventually made the mental leap back across the reversion gap. Sometime, in the next four days or so, he would forget everything that happened from here to that moment. He wondered where he’d be when the time came. Could he get close to this exact set of circumstances? Unlikely in the extreme. But he could do one thing.

Microphone in his suit safely off, he used the seconds left to recite the old song lyric over and over, aloud in case that would help. “Speak the word, the word is all of us. Speak the word, the word is all of us. Speak the word, the—”

At the base of his neck an artificial gland received the specially crafted trigger message

“Sometime, in the next four days or so, he would forget everything that happened to that moment”

sent by Monique from more than 160 million kilometers away. The gland flooded his brain with a biochemical marker.

He lost track of the song lyric, wincing as engineered chemicals sought out every last neuron like a creeping poison. A hot tingling sensation unfolded from somewhere in the back of his head, thorny pressure that started from the bottom of his skull and pushed up and out until his very scalp felt as if it were being prodded by a million tiny needles from the inside.

And then, quick as it had come on, the sensation subsided. Caswell fought to get his breathing under control and carefully opened his eyes. His vision swam, distorted by tears that would not fall away in the absence of gravity. He blinked rapidly to no avail and then gave up.

“I’m sorry to do that to you in the field, Peter.”

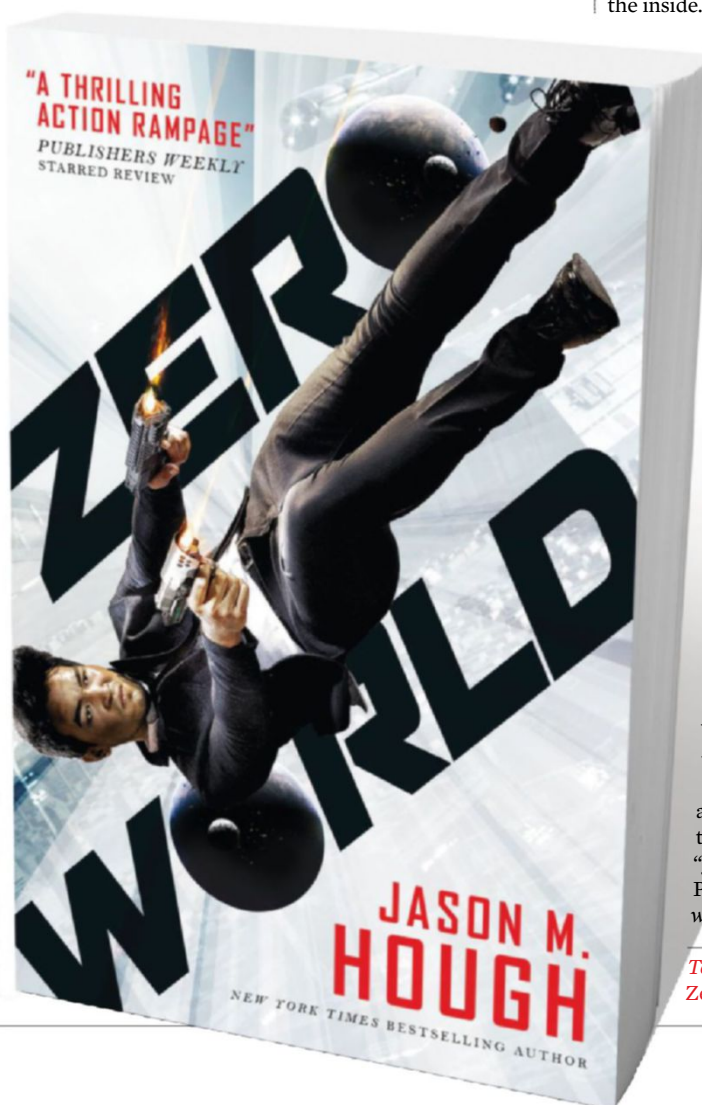
You’d better be. He desperately wanted to speak with her, to have a real conversation. He bit his lip instead and waited to hear what task he had to perform.

“Your new mission is still being designed, I’m afraid. The reasons will become clear. For now, your new goal is as follows...”

Caswell swallowed, waiting for the tears to dry and the pain in his head to abate. God, he missed the flat above Hyde Park. The ritual of it. “Never again, Mo.” He growled the words, made all the more bitter by the knowledge that he’d forget them. He’d forget all of this.

“First,” Monique Pendleton said in a flat, all-business tone that told him things had gotten very grim indeed, “you are to eliminate the crew of the Pawn Takes Bishop. Immediately and with extreme prejudice.” ●

To find out what happens next, pick up *Zero World*, out now from Titan Books





A motley collection of copyright dodgers.

SEASON 2

PENNY DREADFUL

Frankly, my dear, they don't give a damn

► **UK Broadcast** Sky Atlantic, finished
► **US Broadcast** Showtime, finished
► **Episodes Reviewed** 2.01-2.10

► **Subscription-only television** shows often seem better than the rest, don't they? Not only do they usually include sex, violence and swearing (always a Brucie bonus), they have time to breathe, to find their feet, to explore new horizons without easily offended advertisers breathing down their necks. But they're also usually confined to US channels such as HBO, and so when this happens here, albeit co-financed by Showtime and sandwiched among

other Yank exports on Sky Atlantic, it's a shock.

Sky's extraordinary gothic fantasy *Penny Dreadful* is a series that genuinely, honestly, brazenly doesn't give a flying feck what anybody thinks of it, so it never holds back. Its writers gleefully rummage in the toy box of legends, horror stories and out-of-copyright literature and throw all that they find against the wall to see what sticks. In most cases, this would result in scripts so unbalanced and misjudged that they would be unwatchable; the small-screen equivalent of movies *Van Helsing* or *The League Of*

Extraordinary Gentlemen, perhaps. With *Penny Dreadful*, not only has everything splattered on that wall stuck, those concepts have sprouted roots and started growing there – ensuring that series two is even better than the first.

The sheer audaciousness of the plotting is staggering, overlapping a devil-worshipping witches' coven out to ensnare Sir Malcolm's heart with Victor Frankenstein creating a Bride for his Monster, while Dorian Gray romances a transgender prostitute before finally unveiling his Clive Barker-esque Picture. Meanwhile, the American werewolf in London,

ZOOM IN



BEST MOMENT ▲

► Billie Piper's Bride and Reeve Carney's Dorian paint his dancefloor in *their own blood* as they dance after having been shot by Frankenstein. (2.10)

TRIVIA

► Sir Malcolm was given a love affair this year because writer John Logan wanted to express more of Timothy Dalton's personality.

NEED TO KNOW

► The Monster becomes friendly with a blind girl not horrified by his appearance – which happens in Mary Shelley's original novel, *Frankenstein*, when the Monster meets a blind man.

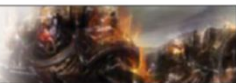
DID YOU SPOT?

► Ethan's real name is Ethan Lawrence Talbot. Lawrence Talbot was the character played by Lon Chaney Jr in 1941's *The Wolf Man*.

IT'S WOSSERNAME! ▼

► Patti LuPone, who plays Vanessa's witch mentor, Joan, also played a character named Joan in *American Horror Story*.





★ BEST IN SHOW ★ The characters who make TV great



STAHMA TARR

Defiance's "Machiavellian puzzle"

► UK Broadcast Syfy, Thursdays ► US Broadcast Syfy, Fridays

Any actress could have been forgiven for turning down the role of alien Stahma Tarr in Syfy's *Defiance*. As if speaking in a made-up language wasn't tough enough, they'd also have to spend up to two hours a day being painted white from head to toe; wear a wig; shove in lilac contact lenses; and spend half their on-screen time semi-naked in a giant hot tub. Add to this their character's status as a cowed, browbeaten wife who is denied equal rights of any kind and... well. *Pass*.

But, as anybody who has watched *Defiance* since the beginning can attest, Stahma has come a long way. Across three seasons, powered not only by compelling writing but by Jaime Murray's no-holds-barred performance, Stahma has shown herself to be one of the most gloriously complex, empowered, manipulative, intelligent, sexual and downright watchable characters on TV. There are other Castithan

women in *Defiance*, but none of the ones we've met so far have come close: this alien has been brought to life so convincingly you sometimes forget she's not even talking English.

What makes Stahma so enticing is that she's a Machiavellian puzzle; there's rarely a moment when you know quite what's going through her head. She may avert her gaze demurely as her husband, Datak, tells her something, but in the next scene she can narrow those same spooky eyes and do something downright vicious. Nothing is beyond her – seduction, power-grabs, even murder – and yet you just can't help but root for her. Which is morally troubling, of course, but that conflict is right at the heart of Stahma.

As we write this we don't know if *Defiance* has a fourth season or not, but if it happens there's one thing we know for sure: she'll be the best thing in it. **Jayne Nelson**



Whose "boo!" would be the most effective?

Ethan, dodges the cops while falling in love with Vanessa as she's chased by a dark force. Did we lose you? No? How about if we mention the hour-long flashback episode in which we meet Vanessa's mentor and see her gruesomely burned at the stake? Or the waxwork museum which creates a Chamber of Horrors? And the voodoo dolls? And the vampires! We mustn't forget the vampires!

So much of this should be exhausting, but it's not. The reason is simple: everybody concerned takes their role deathly seriously, led by Green's mesmerising Vanessa (a Bafta-worthy performance if ever there was one). Each actor makes their performance as grounded in grit and realism as possible, which then successfully sells whatever supernatural nonsense follows. Nothing here is played for laughs, although there *is* humour, thankfully. Perhaps responding to the first year's unrelenting misery, Simon Russell Beale's affable Egyptologist, Ferdinand Lyle, earns a bigger role here, and is frequently hilarious (watching

“Nothing here is played for laughs, although there *is* humour”

him flirt with Josh Hartnett's cowboy, who good-naturedly flirts back, is simply adorable). But for every laugh there's a shock; for every shock there's a gross-out moment; for every unforeseen plot turn there's a recognisable homage to old-school horror that raises a knowing smile. And let's not overlook the cinematography and staging, either: a ball that suddenly becomes a bloodbath in one of Vanessa's visions is spectacular.

Where *Penny Dreadful* can go from this year's unbridled lunacy is anybody's guess. Is there anything left to throw at that wall? We can only wait and see...

Jayne Nelson



And that's why you should floss more regularly.



SEASON 1

DARK MATTER

The spaceship show makes an inauspicious return

► UK Broadcast Syfy, Mondays

► US Broadcast Syfy, Fridays

► Episodes Reviewed 1.01-1.07

⚡ **Typical.** You wait four years for a new spaceship show then two come along at once. When Syfy US axed *Stargate Universe* in 2011, TV was bereft of a spaceship-based show for the first time since *Star Trek: The Next Generation* premiered in 1987. Now that same channel has a brace of new space-faring shows on air. Ironically, first off the blocks (beating *Killjoys* by a week) was *Dark Matter*, created by two producers with a track record on the *Stargate* franchise – Joseph Mallozzi and Paul Mullie.

Sadly, it isn't worth the wait. *Dark Matter* doesn't just feel like nothing has moved on in TV since

Stargate Universe; it actually feels like a step backwards. The clearly limited budget isn't the main problem. There's simply a staggering lack of originality at every level.

The basic idea is *Blake's Seven* with amnesia. Six characters awake from cryogenic sleep on a spaceship, none of them with any memories of who they were before. By the end of the pilot they learn they're all criminals, but they continue to call themselves by numbers, denoting the order in which they woke up. But why have they been brought together? It's a flimsy concept which barely provides a reason for them to stick together and go on "missions". It's an arc plot without a format.

They bicker. They make a move. They discover clues to their pasts.

They wander round the ship a lot, trying to out-exposition each other. They visit really dull planets. They re-enact old *Stargate* plots in new locations.

It's blandly competent and watchable but lacks any real reason to tune in on a weekly basis. If there's a glimmer of hope for the show, it's that the perfectly capable cast may inject some life into the relationships between the characters. They're a bunch of clichés at the moment (the Asian character is a warrior; the tech geek is kooky; the cocky, self-seeking rogue) but there are moments when the actors rise above the mediocrity.

There seems little chance, though, that *Dark Matter* will go where no spaceship show has gone before. **Dave Golder**

ZOOM IN



BEST MOMENT ▲

→ Three and One tied back-to-back on separate chairs, trying to jiggle across a room, arguing about the difference between a shift and tilt and toppling over. (1.04)

TRIVIA

→ When their original pitch for a *Dark Matter* TV show was rejected the creators turned the concept into a comic miniseries.

NEED TO KNOW

→ Mallozzi was an executive producer on *Stargate Universe*, which finished with the crew going into cryogenic stasis. Despite how *Dark Matter* opens, however, Mallozzi claims: "It is a coincidence. But a pretty darn funny one."

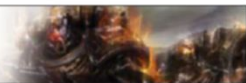
IT'S WOSSERNAME!

→ Melissa O'Neil, who plays Two, was the winner of the third season of *Canadian Idol*.

DID YOU SPOT? ▼

→ The cloning device in the show has a moving light when the lid's closed that makes it look like a photocopier at work.





LINE UP

The month's most quotable dialogue

AMANDA
ROSEWATER

"I just hope you have the balls to show up, so I can shoot them off."

Defiance, Episode 3.08



JOE

"If I'd known you'd be joining us for breakfast, Anita, I'd have got some micro chips."

Humans, Episode 1.01



ELDRITCH

"The supreme being doesn't exist. I realised that when I was 10 years old and prayed for him to heal me. He never answered."

SETRAKIAN

"Yes he did. The answer was no."

The Strain, Episode 2.02



CAPHEUS

"Spirit of Jean-Claude Korean lady, I know you have more important things to do, but for me, nothing is more important."

Sense8, Episode 1.05



SCRIPT EASE

A TV season distilled

SEASON 2

EXTANT

Aliens Vs Androids, round two

► UK Broadcast Amazon Prime, Thursdays

► US Broadcast CBS, Wednesdays

► Episodes Reviewed 2.01-2.05



PREVIOUSLY ON EXTANT: In the near future astronaut Molly Brown becomes mum to an android (Ethan) and an alien. Which is a handy coincidence as the angelic android was the key to destroying the evil alien. But was he really destroyed...?

FADE IN A hi-tech mental institution.

MOLLY
I'm not mad!

NURSE
Yes you are. You've had a complete personality change. You've gone all Sarah Connor in *Terminator 2*.

MOLLY
Well, as you're about to discover in flashback...

Cue **SIX MONTHS AGO FLASHBACK** to her cardigan-loving hubby being killed in suspicious circumstances and the government carting Ethan away.

MOLLY
I'm not mad! It's all a conspiracy. Meanwhile my alien son is killing pregnant women. Montage...

Cue **MONTAGE OF ALIEN BOY** growing into an **ALIEN YOUNG MAN** but stopping before becoming an **ALIEN OLD CODGER** because that doesn't fit in the with **EVERYONE MUST BE BEAUTIFUL** vibe this year.

MOLLY
Which reminds me, where's my fat friend?

NURSE
Too unsightly. The season we have a beautiful female android instead.

FEMALE ANDROID
I will kick ass, too.

MOLLY
I remember the network memo now: more ass-kicking, fewer cardigans.

ENTER the Winchesters' dad.

WINCHESTERS' DAD
I'm a gruff PI, and the deaths I'm investigating are inevitably going to lead to a government conspiracy even though I sneer at the concept of aliens.

MOLLY
I had a space alien in my womb.

WINCHESTERS' DAD
You're mad. But kinda cute.

CUT to a secret official war room.

GENERAL
There's an evil alien loose. Let's bomb it.

UNDERLING
We don't know where it is, sir.

GENERAL
Then bomb everywhere and I'll make an attempt to look conflicted about collateral damage.

CUT to an android creating facility. **ETHAN** plays with

his **UNBELIEVABLY BEAUTIFUL NEW SISTER**.

JULIE (to CHARLIE)
I've altered Ethan's memory to make him think I'm his real mom.

CHARLIE
That's morally dubious. I would've just pulled his legs off.

JULIE
Oh and can you stop popping off to the loo when you're working on the unbelievably beautiful female android.

CHARLIE
Just one question.

JULIE
Yeah?

CHARLIE
Did you have to look up "Extant" in the dictionary before accepting this role?

JULIE
Yeah. You?

CHARLIE
Yup.
Dave Golder



SPURIOUS AWARDS

Celebrating the silliest and strangest moments from the month in TV



BAT-SHIT CRAZY PLAN OF THE MONTH

To sneak a bomb into an enemy's camp Datak Tarr cuts off his own arm on *Defiance*. That's dedication to the cause.



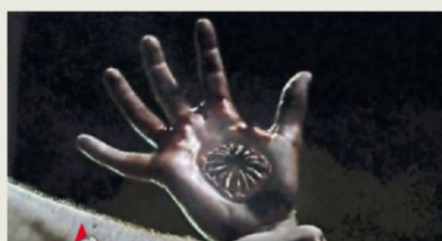
CRYSTAL SKULL OF THE MONTH

Is *The Strain* about the delve into the space between spaces? We certainly hope not.



BREAKING BAD OF THE MONTH

No wonder Pope's so mopey on *Falling Skies*, he's shaved those long greasy locks off!



STAR WARS FAN OF THE MONTH

Tattoos are for wimps! This chap on *Teen Wolf* loves *Star Wars* so much he's had a Sarlacc pit embedded in his hand!



SEPARATED AT BIRTH OF THE MONTH

Jackson Oz from *Zoo* or Nick Burkhardt from *Grimm*? We've no clue.



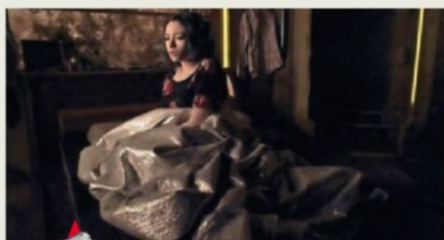
STORMTROOPER COSPLAY OF THE MONTH

How long before someone asks Ezra: "Aren't you a little short for a Stormtrooper?" on *Star Wars Rebels*.



CALL THAT A KNIFE? OF THE MONTH

We know *Killjoys'* Dutch is a badass bounty hunter and all, but that blade is just overkill.



FABULOUS DUVET OF THE MONTH

Five knows how to sleep in style on *Dark Matter*.



FLESH WOUND OF THE MONTH

Er, you might want to get that seen to on *The Last Ship*.



DEAD RISING OF THE MONTH

Wayward Pines or Romero's next zombie movie?

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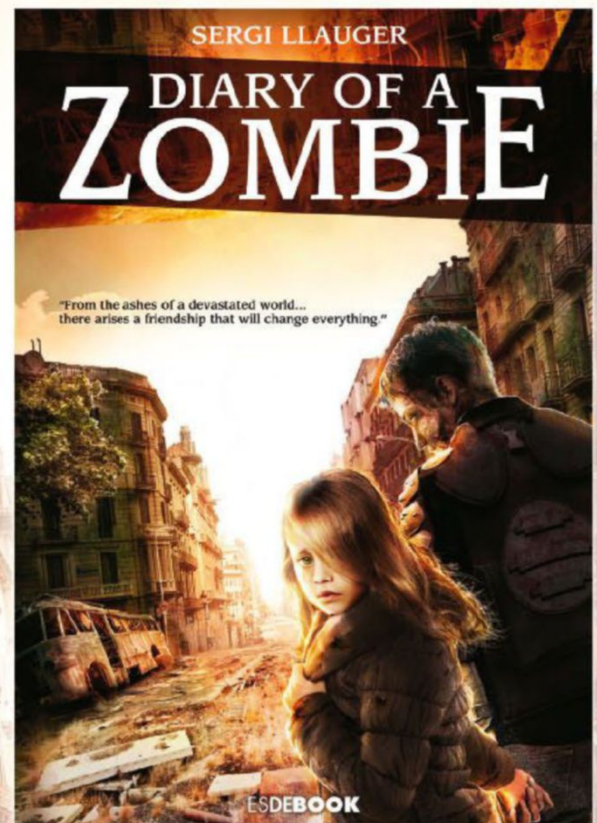
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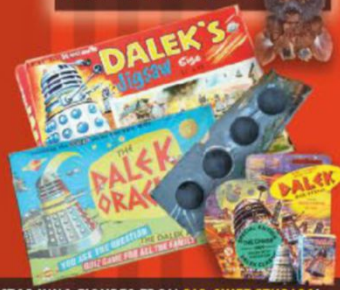
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REBOOTS

In honour of *SFX*'s snazzy new look, here are 20 sci-fi reboot head-scratchers

Quizmaster: Jordan Farley, Community Editor

QUESTION 1

How many years after *Spider-Man* 3 was *The Amazing Spider-Man* released?

QUESTION 2

Wil Wheaton had a role in JJ Abrams' *Star Trek*. Who did he play?

QUESTION 3 PICTURE QUESTION

The Ecto-1 from Paul Feig's *Ghostbuster* has an ornament of what on its hood?

QUESTION 4

Christian Bale wore which actor's batsuit for his *Batman Begins* audition?

QUESTION 5

Fantastic Four's Kate Mara previously played Sue Storm in which show?

QUESTION 6

Which film has the longer runtime (to the minute): *Judge Dredd* or *Dredd*?

QUESTION 7

Casino Royale (2006) was the first official Bond film not to feature which iconic recurring character?

QUESTION 8

Name the island Lara Croft washes up on in the 2013 *Tomb Raider* game.

QUESTION 9

Which Scottish actor voiced *Castlevania: Lord Of Shadows*' Gabriel Belmont?

QUESTION 10

Classic real-time tactical game



QUESTION 3



QUESTION 12



QUESTION 15



QUESTION 20

Syndicate was rebooted in 2012 as what radically different genre?

QUESTION 11

The *Battlestar Galactica* reboot spawned two spin-off shows – what were they called?

QUESTION 12 PICTURE QUESTION

Name the reboot.

QUESTION 13

Three actors from the *Battlestar Galactica* reboot also featured in the *Bionic Woman* reboot. Name two for a point.

QUESTION 14

Diana famously eats a guinea pig in the original *V*. What does Anna scoff in the 2009 reboot?



QUESTION 17

Name the drug that makes lead chimp Caesar (left) super smart in *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes*.

QUESTION 18

Which controversial item of clothing did Superman sport on the cover of *The New 52's Action Comics* #1?

QUESTION 15 PICTURE QUESTION

This vessel featured in a recently rebooted series. Name the ship and the show.

QUESTION 16

Dan Abnett's initial *Guardians Of The Galaxy* line-up featured two characters who weren't part of the film's team – who are they?

QUESTION 19

Who assumed Rod Serling's role as host for the 2002 remake of *The Twilight Zone*?

QUESTION 20 PICTURE QUESTION

Is this an image from *Wolfenstein 3D* or reboot *Wolfenstein: The New Order*?

Answers
1 Five 2 He voices several Romulans on Nero's crew 3 A ghost 4 Val Kilmer's 5 Robot Chicken 6 Neither, they're both 96 minutes long 7 Miss Moneypenny 8 Yamatai 9 Robert Carlyle 10 First person shooter 11 Caprica and *Battlestar Galactica*: Blood & Chrome 12 Katee Sackhoff, Mark Sheppard, Aaron Douglas 14 A rat 15 Thunderbird Shadow from *Thunderbirds Are Go* 16 Quasar and Adam Warlock 17 ALZ-112 18 Jeans 19 Forest Whitaker (Blazkowicz has a nightmare about *Wolfenstein 3D* which you can play!)

How did you do?

Which rebooted franchise are you?



→ 0-5
Flash Gordon



→ 6-10
Godzilla



→ 11-15
Man Of Steel



→ 16-19
XCOM: Enemy Unknown



→ 20
Buffy The Vampire Slayer

Total Recall

Personal recollections of cherished sci-fi



Photography by Joby Sessions

DOCTOR WHO WEETABIX CARDS

By Russell Lewin, Production Editor

A dear old friend of my mum's to this day relates a story about something I did in 1977. She used to buy Weetabix, and at the time *Doctor Who* cards were being given away with every pack of cereal. We bought it too but I used to go round her house for extra cards. Apparently one day, the precocious six-year-old me implored to her in her hall: "Mrs Fraser, could you please eat *more* Weetabix...?"

I don't really blame my younger self for this impish demand: the *Doctor Who* Weetabix cards were brilliant. In '77 *Doctor Who* was, of course, my favourite thing on TV – this was the year of the likes of "The Robots Of Death", "The Talons Of Weng-Chiang" and "Horror Of Fang Rock" – and anything out there with my adored Fourth Doctor or scary Daleks or Cybermen on them was to be seized upon.

I may also have collected the 1975 Weetabix *Who* cards, but it's the '77 ones I have the stronger memories of. I love them for the mix of Pertwee and Baker baddies, illustrated in distinct, of-their-time style. And what



was even better was that very different monsters occupied common landscapes: it made sense when all were from 1974's "The Monster Of Peladon" (Blor, Aggedor, Vega Nexos), but was gloriously inappropriate when you had a Wirrn, a Krynoid and a Zygon all together on a volcanic planet. I'd like to think it was the makers' version of kids creating our own mad battles in our playrooms.

So why did I choose to write this piece now? I think it's because these days I struggle to watch old *Doctor Who* with any real compulsion – I often find it clunky, slow and childish – but these cards embody why I still love the show. The imagery invokes strong nostalgic feelings. Also, whereas onscreen the monsters viewed now can look pretty ropey, they look great on these illustrations. These cards perfectly represent those childhood Saturday nights and their colourful, wonderful creatures, and now that I've rebought them on eBay I'll never part with them again. ●

Russell ate Weetabix this very morning!

FactAttack!

→ The terrific original TV advert for the cards is here: bit.ly/drwhoweetabix. There's something especially fab about a red Dalek...

→ There were four different games on the reverse of the packs (one with a Silurian, woo!), on which you could use your cards as game pieces.

→ The artist for both Weetabix promotions was Gordon Archer, who also drew them a *Star Trek* one. More info on his other work is scant.

→ The set covers 11 stories (three Pertwee, eight Baker) over five seasons – 10 to 14 ("The Three Doctors" to "The Masque Of Mandragora").

SEE YOU
NEXT MONTH!
16 SEP
DETAILS ON
PAGE 31

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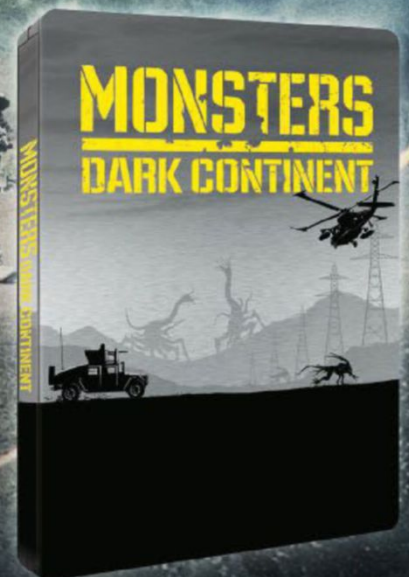
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